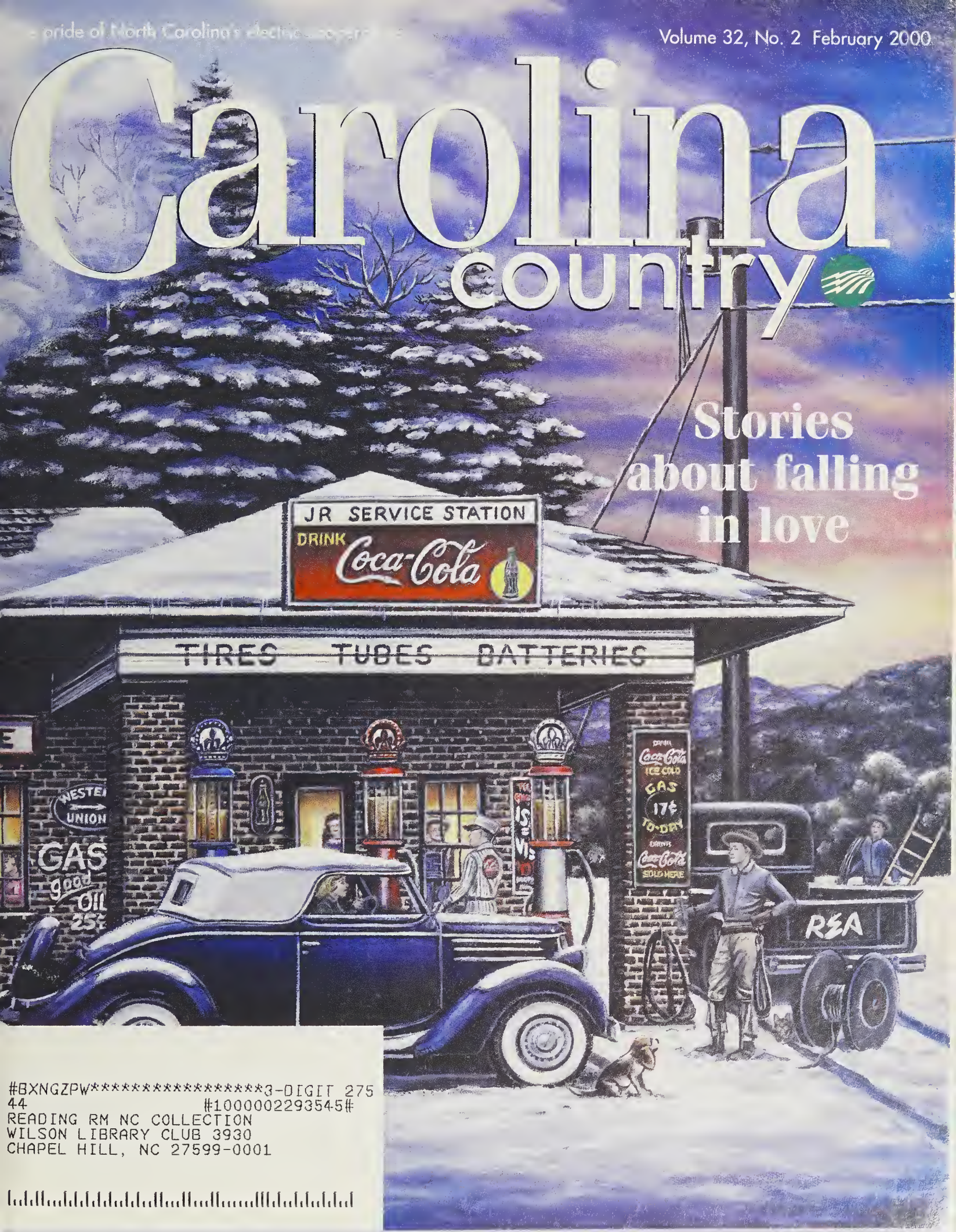
Volume 32, No. 2 February 2000

Carolina country

Stories about falling in love



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Rep. Richard Burr gives his views on electric utility restructuring — page 12

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Volume 32, No. 2, February 2000

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February

Contents

Features

At First Sight 16
Your stories about falling in love. Meeting at Fiddlers Grove, Juliet finds her Bob, a 7-year-old is smitten, Estelle steps in, and others stories of how you met each other.

How Boats Get Character. 20
Thomas Yocum reports on the traditional way of making and fixing boats in Hyde County.

Why You Should Respond to the U.S. Census 23
Completing your U.S. Census form next month will bring direct benefits to your community. *[Not in all editions]*

The Hanging and Further Escapades of George Cunningham. 26
A true story from western North Carolina history. *[Not in all editions]*

Departments

FIRST PERSON 6
A collection of your letters, home remedies, memories and humor. Plus: True confessions of one who worked through the night of Dec. 31, 1999.

MORE POWER TO YOU 12
In his editorial on restructuring the electric utility business, Congressman Richard Burr says, "The time for the federal government to get out of the way is now." Also: Touchstone Energy® sponsors a major PGA event . . . Do appliances draw power when turned off?

CAROLINA CLOSE-UP 28
Grandfather Mountain, Outer Banks, public gardens, an African-American quilt display, kayaking, sailing.

CAROLINA COMPASS 30
February events statewide.

GO ELECTRIC 33
A buyer's guide to "cooking for one."

JOYNER'S CORNER 34
A criss-cross puzzle of the 50 states.

MARKETPLACE 35
A showcase of goods and services.

ONLINE 40
The Mac is back.

ENERGY CENTS 42
How even out your heating and cooling.

HANK'S GARDENING GUIDE . . .44
Azalea care, and the guide to February.

CLASSIFIED ADS 45

CAROLINA KITCHEN 46
A Strawberry Heart Cake.

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23			11.77	11.24	18.81	17.50	30.62	28.00
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25			11.77	11.24	18.81	17.50	30.62	28.00
26			11.77	11.24	18.81	17.50	30.62	28.00
27			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
28			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
29			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
30			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
31			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
32			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
33			11.86	11.33	19.03	17.71	31.06	28.43
34			11.94	11.33	19.25	17.71	31.50	28.43
35			11.94	11.41	19.25	17.93	31.50	28.87
36			12.03	11.50	19.46	18.15	31.93	29.31
37			12.12	11.59	19.68	18.37	32.37	29.75
38			12.21	11.77	19.90	18.81	32.81	30.62
39			12.39	11.94	20.34	19.25	33.68	31.50
40			12.56	12.21	20.78	19.90	34.56	32.81
41			12.74	12.39	21.21	20.34	35.43	33.68
42			12.92	12.65	21.65	21.00	36.31	35.00
43			13.09	12.83	22.09	21.43	37.18	35.87
44			13.45	13.09	22.96	22.09	38.93	37.18
45			13.89	13.45	24.06	22.96	41.12	38.93

MONTHLY RATES

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46	Call for more information		14.42	13.71	25.37	23.62	43.75	40.25
47			15.13	14.07	27.12	24.50	47.25	42.00
48			15.92	14.51	29.09	25.59	51.18	44.18
49			16.72	14.95	31.06	26.68	55.12	46.37
50			17.60	15.39	33.25	27.78	59.50	48.56
51			18.48	15.83	35.43	28.87	63.87	50.75
52			19.37	16.27	37.62	29.96	68.25	52.93
53			20.34	16.89	40.03	31.50	73.06	56.00
54			21.40	17.51	42.65	33.03	78.31	59.06
55			22.81	18.31	46.15	35.00	85.31	63.00
56			24.23	19.10	49.65	36.96	92.31	66.93
57			25.73	19.99	53.37	39.15	99.75	71.31
58			27.50	21.05	57.75	41.78	108.50	76.56
59			29.71	22.28	63.21	44.84	119.43	82.68
60			32.62	23.79	70.43	48.56	133.87	90.12
61			36.25	25.47	79.40	52.71	151.81	98.43
62			40.31	27.23	89.46	57.09	171.93	107.18
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Amazoy is the Trade Mark registered U.S. Patent Office for our Meyer Zoysia Grass.

Mow your zoysia lawn once a month–or less! It rewards you with weed-free beauty all summer long.

7 Ways Your Zoysia Grass Lawn Saves You Time, Work, and Money!

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2 ENDS RE-SEEDING NEVER NEEDS REPLACEMENT

Plug in our zoysia grass and you'll never have to spend money on grass seed again! Since you won't be buying seeds, you won't need to dig and rake–then hope the seeds take root before birds eat them or the next hard rain washes them away.

3 NO NEED TO DIG UP OLD GRASS

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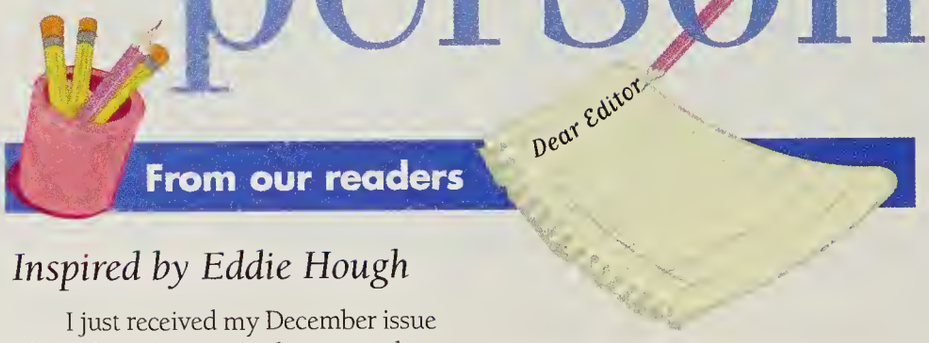

From our readers

Inspired by Eddie Hough

I just received my December issue of Carolina Country, and upon reading the letter from Eddie R. Hough on the "Commentary" pages, I had to respond. I was very touched by the letter from Mr. Hough and wanted to let you and him know how I feel about what he said. I have met many challenged people in my lifetime, and I find these wonderful people to be a blessing as well as an inspiration to me.

Mr. Hough's letter told of how he has overcome physical and mental illness to become a wonderful photographer. He ended his letter with the statement, "I would be honored if you could print it (meaning a sample of his photography) in the magazine to show what handicapped people can do."

I want Mr. Hough to know that there are no handicapped people in this world. Those who view someone different as "handicapped" are simply handicapped in their thinking.

We were all made equal in the sight of God. Most challenged people are more innovative, industrious and productive than those of us who have been blessed with sound minds and bodies.

I say God bless you, Eddie Hough. Keep up your work knowing that God does bless those who help themselves.

Barbara A. Adams
Lansing
Blue Ridge Electric

Thanks for the screens

I would like to thank all the people who answered my request for louvered screen ventilators ["Commentary," December 1999]. I did find them. A gentleman from Rutherfordton knew just what I was looking for. I had spent over 20 years looking for them.

Your magazine is cherished by many.

F. Schweiber
Locust

Killing trees

I find it interesting that you print a letter advocating environmental responsibility ["Your Advice for the New Year," December 1999], while at the same time the cover art for that issue is tree cutting. Surely it is most irresponsible to kill a tree to serve one's decorative vanity. Live or artificial trees would do equally well.

Sara Schwager
Avon

Editor's Note: The December cover art, by Ashe County artist Lenore Depree, illustrated activity in North Carolina's Christmas tree farms. According to the state Department of Agriculture, North Carolina ranks second nationally in trees produced, yielding nearly 4 million trees valued at about $86 million per year. North Carolina's 1,600 growers produce over 12 percent of the real Christmas trees in the United States, including Fraser Fir trees that have decorated the White House eight different times. The average 6- to 7-foot Fraser fir Christmas tree is visited by the grower more than 100 times during its life.

From the Carolina Country Archives

February 1969

- A man and his wife were out driving in the country. He was driving and she was reminiscing.

  Finally, she broke the silence. "John, do you remember when we were first married and had our first car? Remember how close together we used to sit in that old Ford?"

  With a twinkle in his eye, the husband replies, "I haven't moved."

- Sam Ragan, whose popular column "Southern Accent" long gave luster to the Sunday book page in the Raleigh News & Observer, is continuing it in his new paper, The Pilot, at Southern Pines. Sam retired from the N&O to become publisher and editor of The Pilot at the end of 1968.

- Haywood EMC plans to provide underground three-phase service for Hemlock Hills, Inc., which has a 10-year building project underway in the southern end of Transylvania County. The project, being constructed by a non-profit religious organization, will be a year-round Christian camp and conference grounds and will span out over 800 acres.

Merry February

"What is so rare as a day in June?"
A day in February.
When Leap Year gives it 29,
it's longer, but not very.

Could I design the calendar,
I'll tell you what I'd do.
I'd add that day to the month of May,
and make it 32.

February is long enough,
and it should never vary.
But an extra day in the month of May
would make it VERY merry.

Charles Joyner
Hendersonville

I did it my way

Nearly two years ago, I told my wife that I would like to order a power wagon — this is a motorized wheel borrow — to haul my firewood to the basement door. We have a woodstove in the basement. My wife told me it cost too much for the power wagon.

So I had this old lawnmower that looks like it was homemade. It was made in Clinton, Arkansas, and sold by Porter Brothers in Shelby, N.C. I had bought it at a big flea market. It came with a set of disks and a trailer.

I also had a 1980 Cub Cadet lawnmower and a book on old trucks. When I saw a picture in that book of a 1918 Mack Model AC dump truck, I said to myself, I'll just make me a wood truck.

It took me two summers and one winter to complete my project. I like using the hydraulic system to operate the dump bed. So far I have more invested in this project than I would have paid for the power wagon.

I won second place in the 4th of July parade at Green Mountain Park in 1998. The Lenoir News Topic took a picture of it. Edgar Stornes, in Caldwell County, saw it in the newspaper and wrote to congratulate me on making this thing.

Roy Hood
5643 Reid Road
Granite Falls, NC 28630

How to Reach Us

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Fried Chicken

I am a semi-retired Baptist pastor, have pastored churches for over 50 years, and remember very well when pastors were invited to homes for dinners. But in our time, very few pastors get invited out to lunch or dinners anymore.

Not too long ago, a fine family of our church invited our family to their home for an old-fashioned Sunday dinner (lunch). Man, the table was loaded with country-fried chicken (my favorite). We had a wonderful meal and we thoroughly enjoyed the Christian fellowship.

The very next Sunday morning at church, the same dear man came up to me and said, "Pastor, do you have any place to eat today?"

I replied, "Well, no one has invited us as yet."

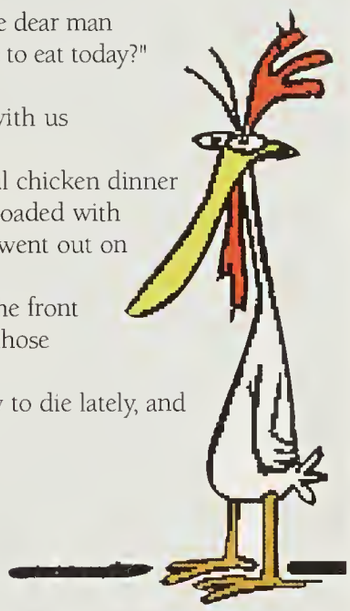
So he said, "We would like for you to go home with us again today."

So we agreed to go, thinking about that wonderful chicken dinner we had last Sunday. Sure enough, again the table was loaded with country-fried chicken. As usual, we ate to our fill and went out on the front porch to chat for a spell.

Then I noticed that the chickens walking across the front yard were staggering, and some fell down. I said, "Sir those chickens look sick."

He replied, "Well, pastor, we have had quite a few to die lately, and we have been trying to eat them as fast as they die."

Dr. Harold Parker
Pinnacle



Home Remedies

Here are some good ideas. These came from electric co-op members in South Dakota. Send us yours.

Save it for soup

When using canned vegetables for a meal, drain off the liquid, freeze it and use the liquid when making homemade vegetable soup. It adds extra flavor.

Irene Murphy, Huron
Dakota Energy Cooperative

Add ammonia

To clean very dirty work clothes, add 1/2 cup household ammonia to your wash water.

Marilyn Matson, Ramona
Sioux Valley-Southwestern Electric Cooperative

White it out

If you have a scratch or nick on a white appliance, just touch it up with a little white correction fluid.

Evelyn Kjirstad, Wall
West River Electric Association

Fresh air fan

Attach a stick-on air freshener of your favorite scent to one of the blades on your ceiling fan. This will circulate fragrance throughout the room.

Noelene Thurow, Madison

first person

"The Wes" still knows how to run the lines during an outage

I just want to thank our cooperative for the fast action to get our lights returned to us here in Gates County after Hurricane Floyd. It was great to return to normal again. Along with no lights, our entire 13 acres were under water. On that first day, we were in a houseboat. No damage to speak of, thank God.

Now here is a little story I thought our readers might enjoy.

My husband, Wesley Jones, was a 1st Class lineman for Stackhouse Inc. until he became disabled in 1977. But that never stopped him from wanting to return to the job he really loved. So every time he gets a chance (such as when a storm like Floyd comes along), he will "run the lines out" by taking out his truck and looking to try and find the problems. Ninety percent of the time, if it's where he can see, he will find the problem.

With all the storm breaks he has seen, including those in North Carolina (at the time he worked with Stackhouse, we lived in Virginia), he knows that all the problems are not all right out there in plain sight. During ice storms most of their work is especially hard on all the crewmen. They have to walk out the lines through miles and miles of iced-over land and through ice-broken trees. Then they go back to the trucks for supplies, then to drag new line back down to make the repair.

When we heard the trucks and their saws beginning at the end of our lane on Union Branch Road, we knew it wouldn't be long before we would have power. At the first sound, Wesley headed for the end of the lane to investigate. He watched for a while and walked back, came in and said, "We'll have power within the hour."

At the time he walked in, I was on the phone with our neighbor, Geri Cowley, and I told her what Wesley predicted. Geri said, "Let's put the clock on him, Peggy."

Wesley had done this before, so I had more faith in what he said. But we put him on the clock. It was 7:23 p.m. by our clocks. I then called my neighbor, Ann, and told her. Both neighbors told their husbands, too.

At 8:22 p.m. (truthfully) BINGO! There they were, the lights!

My phone rang seconds later. "Tell Wesley he is good!" said Geri.

No sooner had I hung up when the phone rang again, and it was Ann, who said the same thing. They just could not believe it.

We all had a very good laugh. And we needed it.

When the next one comes along (which I hope is a long way off), "The Wes" will be out there running the lines out again from the road, looking for the source of the problems.

Again we want to thank not just our crews here in Carolina, but all of the crews who help return the power. They are not thanked enough for the unseen hard and sometimes cold and dangerous work they all do for us.

Peggy Jones
Corapeake
Roanoke Electric Cooperative member

LightLines by Donna Hardy

"After two days I realized Harry wasn't just ignoring me."

Your favorite jokes

Too rough

A little girl asked her mother, "Can I go outside and play with the boys?"

Her mother replied, "No, you can't play with the boys. They're too rough."

The little girl thought about it for a few moments and asked, "If I can find a smooth one, can I play with him?"

The leaf

A little boy opened the big, old family Bible and with fascination began looking at the old pages. Then something fell out of the Bible, and he picked it up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf from a tree that had been pressed in between pages.

"Momma!" he called out. "Look what I found!"

"What do you have there, dear?" his mother replied.

Clearly astonished, the young boy said, "It's what Adam was wearing!"

Watching the world keep on turning

Confessions of a utility worker on Y2K duty

By Renee Gannon

Y2K Shmy2kay. After years, months, weeks, days and hours of preparation for the big Dec. 31, 1999 to Jan. 1, 2000 rollover event, the Year 2000 came in like a lamb, not the lion some were predicting or expecting.

And did you notice that the lights stayed on?

In the weeks before New Year's Eve, a mountain ski resort in western North Carolina boldly stated on a billboard for all to see that "At 11:59 p.m. on 12/31/99, we guarantee that the lights will go out (that way, you can see the fireworks better)." The local electric cooperative, Blue Ridge Electric, had several customers call about THAT statement.

But electric utilities across the country were well prepared for the Y2K event. The power grid stayed intact.

Across North Carolina, the New Year came with a splash of fireworks and collective sighs of relief. At the state's 27 electric cooperatives, a quiet night and a smooth transition into 2000 welcomed co-op staff who diligently worked on what was considered one of the most momentous occasions in our lifetime. Each co-op was ready for any potential problem, Y2K-related or not. Whether staffing in full or just with a skeleton crew, the co-ops kept track of the New Year as it rolled across the time zones during the day and evening. Many co-ops had staff work during the evening to monitor operations and talk to customers; and some co-ops had employees posted at substations — mainly in case *somebody*, not some system, caused problems.

The electric co-ops felt confident the power would stay on, but were prepared for anything. Thankfully, mild weather across the state minimized weather problems. A few minor outages were reported during the day and evening due to everyday occurrences.

"We are pleased to say that we've had an uneventful evening," said Chuck Terrill, CEO and executive vice president of North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, the generation and transmission cooperative for the co-ops. "The cooperatives were well prepared – all systems were Y2K-ready. New Year's Eve 1999 was just a normal day in the electric cooperative world."

Twiddling thumbs

Well, not normal to those of us who watched the world turn to a new year via televisions and computer screens – at our offices. At NCEMC, the statewide headquarters for the electric co-ops, located in Raleigh, members of several divisions from customer service to power supply sat and waited and watched. Throughout the day of Dec. 31, we monitored the world and the electric co-ops. We were ready for any problem — Y2K, weather or somebody.

In the Cooperative Y2K Center, computers lined the boardroom table and two large TVs flashed images from across the world. The dry-erase board, set up in a grid pattern and ready for outage and news reports, remained mostly empty. A dorm-sized refrigerator, packed with orange juice, soda, cheese and Jimmy Dean sausage biscuits, set ready for the hungry or bored. Chips, salsa, apples and oranges sat scattered on a table.

Information technology personnel (the computer gurus) ran hourly checks on our systems looking for viruses or other problems. Communications staff surfed television channels and Y2K and Internet news sites every 30 minutes looking for any sign of problems concerning utilities, computers or terrorism. Others monitored the supply of electricity to the co-ops.

At 6 p.m., we began hourly checks with the co-ops via e-mail and the phone. Repeatedly, the "all's well" sign came back nearly instantly. Occasionally, replies reported a tree falling on a line or a car smacking into a utility pole, all causing minor, short-lived outages — everyday occurrences in the life of an electric co-op.

These hourly checks also provided a bit of humor from the outside. Here are some examples of the reports we received.

"So quiet around here we've been watching Barry Mannilow on TV sing those old songs. And poor old Peter Jennings looks like he'll fall asleep if Iraq doesn't launch a scud missile or something."

"Our first Y2K glitch of the evening was a men's toilet not filling with water (which was quickly and masterfully repaired)."

"We have some buffalo wings left but our cheesecake is almost gone, so Y2K needs to hurry and get here."

Reports of suicidal squirrels also came in.

In Randolph County, "the squirrel was on his way to the favorite nut tree to store up for Y2K when he crossed a fuse and K-A-P-O-W!. He got zapped and became a Y2K casualty."

Out in the mountains, a squirrel decided to eat a walnut on top of a transformer, resulting in "ala roasted squirrel and one resident without power for 59 minutes."

We all took the task at hand seriously, but light-heartedness helped relieve the quiet, tedious, long night.

At 11:30 p.m., about 20 of us got together for cake and some type of sparkling fruit cider (one sour sip and you quickly remembered that you were in fact still at work). We then returned to our posts to await the midnight hour. Many of us watched the Waterford crystal ball drop in New York City's Time Square on a snowy, squiggly TV screen, and called our loved ones soon after.

The event was a non-event for us. Well, there was the mystery signal. It was a fast beeping sound, and we couldn't figure out what was making it. Finally we tracked it down to a brand new clock radio still packed in its box (the alarm was factory set at 12:00 a.m.). Our extensive Y2K training told us to rip out the clock's power supply (batteries).

By 2 a.m., many staff members were sent home, while the rest headed out the door just before sunrise.

So to recap the Year 2000 rollover at the electric co-ops' statewide headquarters: we ate a smorgasbord of food that satisfied all tastes, we drank lots of caffeinated beverages, we watched TV and our computer screens, we laughed, we roamed the empty halls, we stopped an annoying beeping clock in its tracks, we shot Silly String at co-workers, and we agreed that Paris had the best fireworks show.

And the power stayed on.

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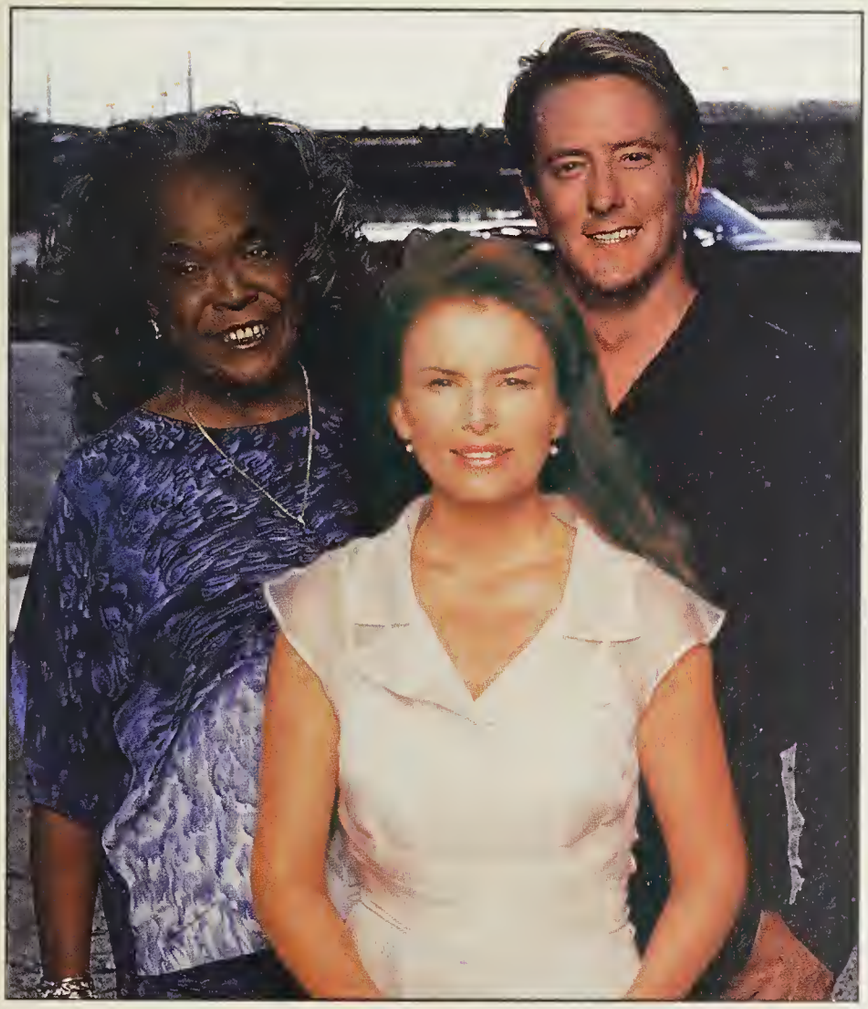

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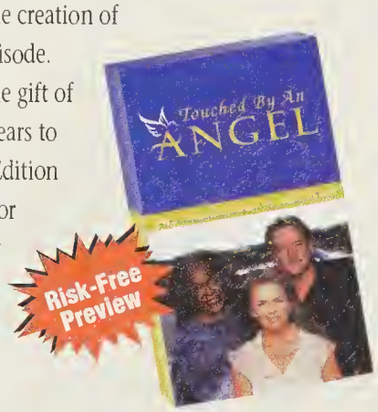

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Commentary

The time for the federal government to get out of the way is now

By Representative Richard Burr

As we embark on the new millennium, we should expect many changes in our daily lives. After all, companies are becoming more efficient, people are communicating through e-mail as often as they use a telephone, and millions of Americans are doing their shopping without leaving the comfort of their homes. The electric utility industry is no exception to the changing environment. It has become more responsive, better prepared, and provides better service than ever.

As the industry modernizes services, the culture of the industry is also evolving. During the 1990s, states began to deregulate their electricity industries to increase competition and thus, lower consumers' electricity costs. By 1997, only eight states had adopted retail competition plans. But by the end of 1999, that number had tripled, encompassing over 60% of the nation's population. The support for deregulation has grown significantly. But unless the Congress removes the federal barriers that stop states from deregulating their electricity industries, the consumers will be left out in the cold. The time for Congress to act is now.

Why the rush to restructure? There are many compelling arguments for increasing competition in the electricity industry. On one level, the Department of Energy estimates that a restructured electricity market will result in a $20 billion savings for the American taxpayer. It is also important to examine the money spent on power by various sectors of our economy. In North Carolina, electricity is one of the most expensive costs for our schools. If these schools could "shop around" for less expensive power, the savings could be used to pay teachers more or buy new computer equipment. For many small businesses, electricity is the second highest expense following wages. Historically, in most industries, deregulation has meant lower prices for the consumer and we expect the same to hold true for the electricity industry.

According to a recent Government Accounting Office (GAO) report, everyone, including the federal government, will reap the benefits of an open marketplace. Competition can cut the federal government's electric bill by up to $8 billion. A report prepared by the National Taxpayers Union (NTU) concluded that the indirect savings from electric competition could be even greater. NTU estimates electric competition will lower the rate of increase in the Consumer Price Index, reducing federal spending by up to $75 billion, more than the total estate and gift taxes expected by the federal government over the next three years.

So what role should the federal government play to facilitate the change from a structured electric utility industry to a competitive one? First and foremost, we must DO NO HARM. The role of the federal government in this process must be to remove existing federal barriers to competition, while allowing each state government to address its responsibilities as regulators of retail competition.

Second, Congress must not use federal legislation to preempt existing state laws and regulations. For example, most individuals are aware that the North Carolina General Assembly recently passed and Governor Hunt signed into law a bill allowing electric co-cops to enter into the sale of non-traditional products and services. It would be misguided and heavy-handed for the federal government to enact electricity restructuring legislation that included a provision limiting the scope of business a co-op can enter. You can rest assured that any bill that comes before Congress with such a provision will be opposed by me and several of my colleagues who understand the important role that co-ops play in providing service to our nation's rural communities.

Congress must remain committed to passing legislation that protects the environment, that keeps our lights on, and ultimately benefits consumers.

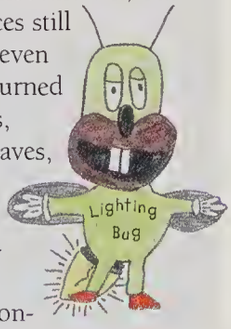
While the Legislative Study Commission on the Future of Electric Service in North Carolina continues to draft recommendations for the future of retail electric service in our state, it is my hope that Congress can pass a responsible electricity restructuring bill this year that can be signed into law by the President. Above all, Congress must remain committed to passing legislation that protects the environment, that keeps our lights on, and ultimately benefits consumers. 20th Century rules and regulations served this industry and our country well by building the most vibrant and reliable electric industry in the world. Congress must now be bold enough to let states lead the way into the 21st Century and provide consumers with a reliable, competitive electricity industry.

Congressman Richard Burr, a Republican from Winston-Salem, represents the 5th Congressional District. He is a member of the Energy & Power Subcommittee of the House Commerce Committee that is considering federal legislation on restructuring the electric utility industry.

Ask the Lighting Bug

Do appliances draw power even when they are turned off?

Mr. Lighting says:



You may not know it, but many appliances still use electricity even when they're turned off. Televisions, VCRs, microwaves, computers, stereo equipment and telephones may draw energy continuously to provide "instant-on" features, to run their clock and timer functions, operate your motion sensor lights or "remember" your local television stations.

For an average household, the amount of power used and the cost you pay for phantom loads aren't that significant. For instance, your TV may cost you an additional $5-10 per year.

To minimize your own phantom load, use a wall switch to control the power to the outlet for your TV, VCR or other appliances. Or, you can plug these appliances into a power strip or surge protector that can be manually turned-on and off.

Touchstone Energy® cooperatives sponsor PGA tournament to help youth athletics

For the second straight year, Touchstone Energy® cooperatives' sponsorship of the Tucson Open golf tournament in Arizona will support programs for disadvantaged youth and offer some of the most exciting golf on the PGA tour. The tournament tees off Feb. 21, and Gabriel Hjertstedt is expected to return to defend his 1999 title, clinched in a play-off finish.

The event's organizers, the Tucson Conquistadores, are a non-profit group dedicated to youth athletic programs. Last year, Touchstone Energy helped the Conquistadores raise more than $400,000 to bring athletic programs to thousands of young people.

"Our organizations share the common goals of making a difference in the lives of children and building stronger communities," says Dennis Criswell, vice-chair of Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, Inc. "For more than two generations, electric cooperatives have been active members and supporters of our communities. Through events such as The Touchstone Energy Tucson Open, we are continuing our commitment to serving all customers, large and small, with integrity, accountability, innovation and community involvement."

Touchstone Energy is an alliance of local, consumer-owned utilities around the country committed to providing high standards of service to customers, large and small. Included are North Carolina's electric cooperatives and their statewide organizations. Touchstone Energy is now America's largest network of energy providers, composed of more than 560 cooperatives in 38 states, serving more than 15 million customers every day.

Also in Tucson, Touchstone Energy will co-present the first national conference for electric cooperatives and their business customers Feb. 23-25. The first of its kind, the "New and Emerging Technologies Conference" will focus on helping America's business customers in their energy management and technology needs.

The goal of Touchstone Energy cooperatives in co-presenting this conference is to help the business customers of electric and energy cooperatives effectively utilize and/or market new, cutting edge technologies.

For more information, visit: www.touchstoneenergy.com .

Seen this lately?

The power service line between these two poles is hanging low because the line has been stretched. It could have been caused by a loose guy wire. Or a limb could have fallen on the line and stretched it. If you see something like this report it to your electric cooperative. Low, sagging lines are dangerous, particularly if they are accessible to vehicular traffic. Don't take a chance; call your cooperative. *(Photo by Talmadge Evers, job training and safety specialist with the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives.)*

A new course trains linemen who work on transmission lines

The North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives (NCAEC) is offering a new course in transmission line training for electric cooperative linemen.

Transmission lines are high-voltage lines that carry power to substations.

NCAEC's Job Training and Safety Department offers a wide variety of technical training for cooperative linemen. Only recently have the state's electric cooperatives begun to handle their own transmission maintenance without employing outside contractors, thus creating the need for comprehensive job and safety training in this area.

The training focuses on the energized maintenance of overhead transmission lines. This hands-on instruction involves the use of live line tools to change out insulators and arms; installing, climbing and working on steel pools; and the installation of armor rods and ties with hot sticks. Other topics include:

- Instruction on transmission design and specifications
- Climbing with ladders and working on steel poles
- Transmission tools demonstration
- Attaching and separating steel poles
- Proper fall protection on steel structures
- Polymer insulators and their use

"We always want to be responsive to the training needs of our cooperatives," said Tommy Greer, director of Job Training and Safety for NCAEC. "Transmission training just focuses on another facet of a lineman's job. This new training will benefit the cooperative, the lineman and the consumer by enhancing the lineman's technical and safety skills and establishing a well-trained work force. A safe and well-trained work force translates into better service reliability for our members."

Mike Adcock

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At first sight

Stories about falling in love

We enjoyed your letters and e-mails detailing "How We Met." As the entries poured in, those of us around the office were inspired to share our own love stories. Leisha actually met her future mate on a blind date. Jennifer met her husband at — where else — a wedding. Renee snagged her soulmate in a Raleigh nightclub called "Dreams." Jenny met hers down the road (they grew up together). I first met my husband-to-be while I was in college when he came to a party at my home. There was a catch (in more ways than one): he had brought his girlfriend with him.

The "hows" and "whys" of our stories vary: some felt love at first sight, while it took time for others to realize they were hooked. For some of us it was a little bit of both. But one theme is consistent in nearly all the recollections — love seems to drop out of the sky when you least expect it. Thank goodness for life's sweet surprises.

Next month we will run your "Advice for Newcomers to North Carolina." Deadline was Jan. 15. For other themes of 2000, see page 18. For more stories like these, go to Tar Heel Tales at www.carolinacountry.com.

– Kim Whorton Tripp

A sweet lady named Estelle

I was an unwed mother in a small town where I knew no one. I lived in a little millhouse on a quiet street and was just getting through day by day. I figured any chance for romance for me was long gone.

My neighbor was a sweet, elderly lady named Estelle. She never judged or said an unkind word. Instead, she played matchmaker.

One night as Estelle was preparing dinner for a guest named Gary, she dialed up my number and handed him the phone. He invited us over, and with my three-month-old daughter in tow, we went. We talked well into the evening. I found that Gary enjoyed just sitting and watching my daughter as much as I did. The next night we had dinner out, and he was thrilled rather than annoyed to have her with us. He carried her diaper bag and even apologized about putting her car seat in the front seat rather than the back because his back seat belts were buried deep in the seat. I knew then that I had either found a real prize or a prize actor.

Sunday morning came and Gary took us all to church: me, my daughter, Estelle and her grandson. I wondered what we would do with the car seat, as Estelle needed to sit in the front. I shouldn't have worried. Gary had gotten up early and dug the seat belts out of the back seat. He opened doors for us and carried bags and helped Estelle to the church door – a total gentleman and sweetheart.

Later that night we kissed for the first time. With that kiss I knew I had found what I thought I might never find. Gary proposed two weeks later, and two years later we were married. Estelle was our honored guest.

Jennifer Miller
New London
Union EMC member

Ooo Baby!

When I was two months old, my mother took me out to show me off to the world. We lived in a small community where everyone knows everyone and people gather at the country store. My future husband was at the store when I made my public debut. He was only seven years old, but he says he remembers that when my mother pulled the blanket back to show me off he saw a pretty baby with big eyes.

Years passed and I visited his family often, because I went to school with his sister and we lived nearby. When I was 13, he asked my mother if I could go riding with him. She said yes, and so we did.

More years passed. I went to school and he served four years in the Navy. If I wasn't busy, we'd see each other when he came home on leave. When he got out of the Navy we really began to date. One thing led to another, and when I was 18 we were married.

We have been together for 45 years. We have seven children (four girls, three boys) and 15 grandchildren (11 girls, four boys). We are still together, still happy, and looking forward to another 45 years.

Cloyce W. Parker
Murfreesboro
Roanoke Electric Cooperative member

Romeo and Juliet and Bob

In February 1954, I was a schoolteacher playing Juliet in a play at the Honolulu community theater. The scenes were separated by blackouts, during which Juliet (who didn't have her glasses) needed help on and off a revolving section of the set that held her balcony, her bedroom and a stairway.

The stagehand assigned to help was an off-duty sailor from Pearl Harbor. The only thing the fair Juliet noticed about him during the show's run was his denim jacket with "Bob" painted on it in fluorescent letters. After the show, the cast and crew went on a beach picnic.

When Juliet saw the stagehand by daylight, it was love at first sight. Juliet's Romeo never stood a chance.

Juliet and her sailor dated the rest of the spring, married in June and lived at Waikiki until his discharge from the Navy when they came to live in North Carolina near his family.

We will celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2004.

Janet Adkins
Arapahoe
Tideland EMC member

Puppy love or Providence?

On the morning of March 12, 1998, I was thinking about having been a widow for the past four years to the week. I talked to God about my life and the gratitude I felt now that I knew I could survive alone and still have a measure of joy. I prayed to God, "If you want someone in my life, you may just have to drop him out of heaven."

Walking to my car, I noticed a huge cardinal staring at me from a cherry tree. I remembered that my grandma used to say it meant you would see your sweetheart that day. "Very funny, God," I thought.

That morning as I typed and listened to the public radio I heard the mention of a familiar name. I told my colleague, "That's odd; that was the name of my childhood sweetheart." I thought nothing more of it. When I returned home there was a message on my answering machine. It was the voice of my childhood sweetheart; someone I hadn't seen in 32 years. When we spoke, he explained that he had never forgotten me after all these years and that he had now returned to North Carolina to live. We became reacquainted with one another over the phone, and we filled each other in on the details of our lives. When I saw him in person the next evening, it was as if the years had disappeared and we were back in the eighth grade. Ten weeks later we were married and sharing the life we were meant to have, possibly from the beginning.

It makes me wonder if there is something to puppy love and if our early instincts and inclinations are closer to our true selves than we might imagine. How we met? We believe it was a marriage arranged in heaven!

Karen Pressley
Wingate
Union Electric member

Break a leg

Although I grew up in New Jersey and my husband is from New York, we met right here in wonderful North Carolina.

I'd been working for a church newspaper. It was March, and I had gone to St. Joseph's Church in Newton to cover some event. I sat to the left of the program coordinator. On her right was a recently widowed gentleman who was active in church life, painted watercolors, and liked to take pictures.

Toward the end of a delightful conversation he invited me to his lake home to see his paintings. It sounded like the old "come-up-and-see-my-etching" come-on, so I demurred. But I did give him my business card.

A few days later I received a card with a little violet tucked inside. The next day another arrived with a miniature painting. Card followed card, and when we finally had our first "date" (wallpapering my dining room), he brought me a big bouquet of the most beautiful flowers from his garden.

We've been married 12 years come April. Frank later told me that he was to have brought another woman to that program at St. Joseph's, but that she'd fallen and broken, not one, but BOTH of her legs. I don't really believe that God does things like that to people, but it's always been in the back of my mind that He wanted to make doubly sure that I met Frank that day.

Audrey Bollero
Statesville
EnergyUnited member

Cold potatoes and mayonnaise

On a hot spring day in 1994 I was looking for friends and music at Fiddlers Grove Old Time Music Convention. I happened on the campsite of Donnie "Dobro" Scott, who invited me to stay awhile and share some food: cold boiled potatoes and a big jar of mayonnaise. Strangely enough, it seemed to be just what I wanted.

During that weekend I kept running into Donnie. His friends later told me he had been saying, "I've met the woman I'm going to marry." Our courtship lasted two years.

In 1996 we decided we'd like to get married at Fiddlers Grove. Wansie Van Hoy, whose family has hosted the event since 1924, offered the porch of a little log cabin just a few feet from where Donnie and I first met, as a "wedding chapel."

On that happy day, our preacher's car broke down and with just minutes to spare the Van Hoys paged the campground to find a cheerful, willing minister/music man who conducted the ceremony in Bermuda shorts.

A lovely photo of the three of us made the front page of the Statesville paper.

When people ask me what attracted me to Donnie, I tell them "cold potatoes on a hot day!"

Barbara Scott
Dobson
Surry-Yadkin EMC member

Persistence

My name is Cathy Staton, and I was married to Donald Ray Staton. We have a 10-year-old daughter and a 14-year-old daughter. On July 31, 1998, my husband was diagnosed with primary lung cancer, which had also spread to his bones. On Feb. 28, 1999, my husband took his last breath. It was the most devastating torture any family could go through.

I believe in my heart that Donald sent Ronnie Lee to me. Ronnie had split up with his wife in February 1999. After I turned him down many, many times, I finally agreed to see him. Ronnie took my kids and me out to do some of the fun things that we hadn't done in so long. He understands that my girls and I will never get over the loss of Donald. Our house is filled with images of him in every room. Ronnie is the most understanding, loving, sweetest person I've ever met. He even gave me the first roses I ever got. He couldn't believe I had never gotten a dozen roses before.

I'm glad I finally let Ronnie into my life. Because I kept turning down his advances for months, you would think he would have given up on me. I was cold and mean to him, because that was how I felt inside, cold like a stone. But I thank whatever force he says made him keep pursuing me. I believe, and Ronnie believes, that that force was Donald. We believe Don knew that we needed each other. Thank you, Don. Thank you, Ronnie. I love you dearly.

Cathy Staton
Wallburg
EnergyUnited member

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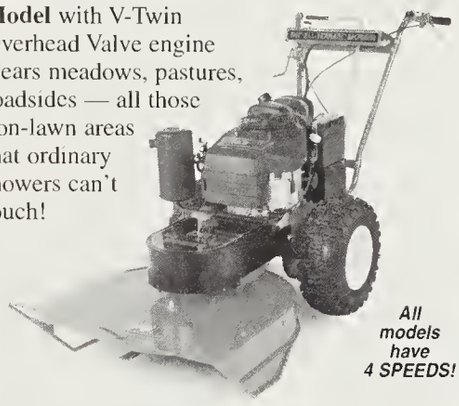

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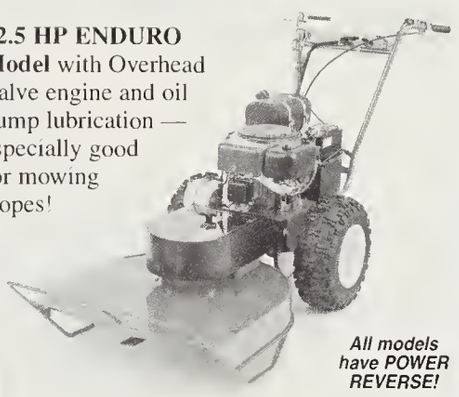

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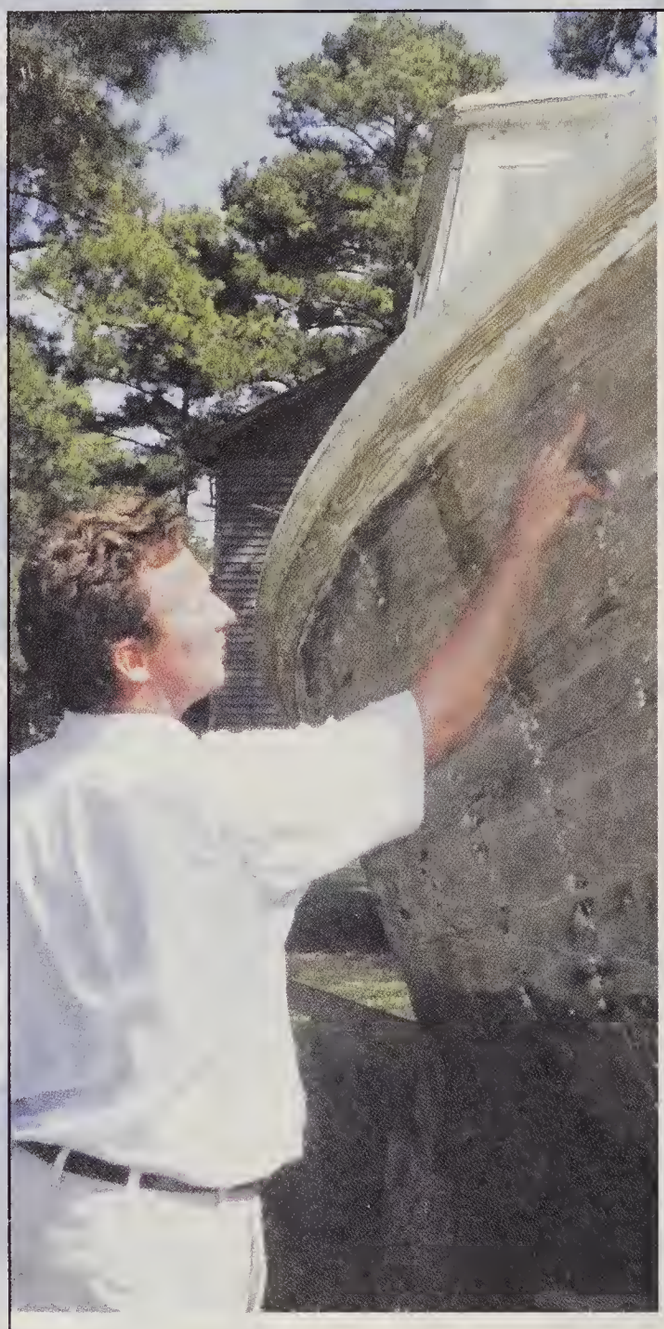
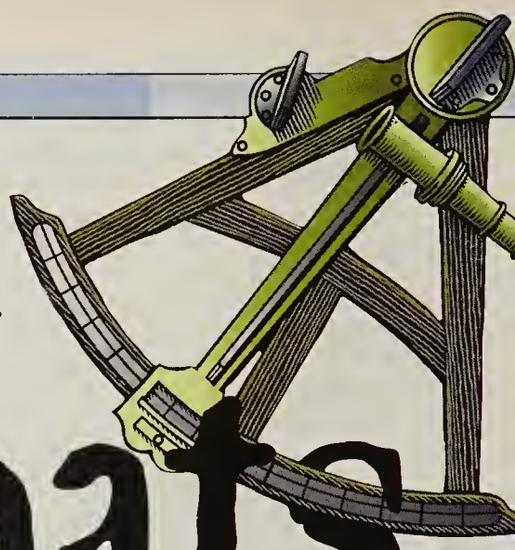


"A wooden boat is more comfortable. It rides better. And you catch more fish in it."

Mike Mullen, boat builder, Gull Rock



How boats get character

Building and fixing boats in Hyde County

By Thomas Yocum

At the end of a marsh-lined country road, in the tiny Hyde County community of Gull Rock, a covey of old wooden boats rings the yard around a simple metal building. The old prams, shad boats and skiffs are from a different time, when boats were the base form of transportation along the Carolina coast, and local boat builders were an important part of the community.

Mike Mullen moves past the old hulls, preparing a more modern work boat for its owner, a local commercial fisherman. A red diesel pick-up rumbles into the yard, and the fisherman and his young son pile out, smiling and joking with Mullen as they inspect the new decking he installed on the sturdy white boat.

In no time, they hitch the boat trailer and leave. They were eager to get the boat back in the water because the fishing is good, Mullen explains. He should know. A former fisherman, he's spent plenty of time on the water. Now he's mostly on land, repairing, renovating and rescuing the boats of Hyde County from uncertain futures.

Mullen is the boat builder of Gull Rock. He's not yet 40 years old, but he's one of the last of the last. And he couldn't be happier.

For centuries, the boat builders of the northern Carolina coast were an essential part of the lives of the people who lived on the wild western edges of Pamlico Sound. Native Americans hollowed the trunks of huge trees to make their canoes. European builders utilized the abundant stands of Atlantic white cedar and knobby-kneed cypress trees for their boats, which soon plied the rivers and sounds with increasing frequency.

Faced with a maze of marshes and low land, generations of local residents relied on the water to get around. "Boats were often the main source of transportation," says Mike Alford, retired curator of maritime research for the N. C. Maritime Museum in Beaufort. "Anything with wheels in that part of the country was at a disadvantage because of the low-lying land."

Alford says the people of the remote coastland communities depended on boat builders for their transportation needs. Local craftsmen

The skeleton of a new Harkers Island boat.

kept pace with each improvement, providing a home-spun alternative to fancier, factory-made craft.

The result, Alford says, was an array of shapes and styles of watercraft, each designed to match the conditions fishermen from different communities most often faced. Less sheltered areas required more seaworthy vessels, with higher bows and gunwales. More sheltered areas, often with shallower, shoal water favored smaller, flat-bottomed boats, with lower bows and more modest lines.

"Every community had its boat builders," Alford says. "And to some extent, boats can be identified with the communities where they were built. They have general similarities, but there are also subtle differences that allow folks who know boats to tell if they're from Harkers Island or Hatteras or Manteo."

As generations of boat builders in each community gently coaxed cypress and juniper boards into place, they were following the distinctive design templates of their predecessors. Over time, Alford says, their ability to build boats seemed to become almost instinctive.

"They say that on Harkers Island a child can be born and taken away from the community and that someday he'll end up building a boat that looks just like a Harkers Island boat," he says. "It may be a little far-fetched, but there's also a ring of truth to it. For many, boat building is in their blood."

Boat character

One of those who seems to have the blood of the boat builder is Robert Ross. Together with his father, Ross built more than 300 boats over a 20-year period ending in the mid-1970s.

Ross, 64, remembers when local boat builders were beginning to be in short supply in the mid-1950s. "There were very few around," he says. "There was a fellow, Joe Pugh, out at Gull Rock. He was kind of the boat builder of Gull Rock. Then there was Alton Sawyer in Rose Bay. And there were a few others who made a few here and there."

Working with his father at the small sawmill across from their Lake Landing home as a teenager, Ross says it all began when somebody stopped and asked if he could build a small boat out of the lumber they were milling.

"That's what really started it. It was about a 14-footer. It was a little bit crude, but it came out all right," Ross remembers. Word soon spread about the pair's rugged, well-built boats, and order after order came in. "The wagging tongue of a satisfied customer is the best advertisement," he says.

Ross says local boat building meant more than just making money. "We never sold a boat for a real profit. I had boats down as low as $35. But a lot of people were able to afford the boats and have access to the open water. We never made much money, I just enjoyed doing it."

In a community where money was scarce, and outside resources often scarcer, people needed to be resourceful, Ross explains. "When somebody needed something, if they didn't have it, they improvised. When something worked, it sold to the community." Bent nails took the place of fancier brass fixtures. Old boot heels were recycled to form watertight gaskets for the propeller shafts in the bottom of the boats. "That was something," Ross laughs.

As new ideas took root, local traditions and styles were slowly born. The different styles soon came to identify different communities, "just like the dialect folks speak," Ross says.

> **"They say that on Harkers Island a child can be born and taken away from the community and that someday he'll end up building a boat that looks just like a Harkers Island boat."**
>
> *Mike Alford, retired curator of maritime research for the N. C. Maritime Museum.*

Over the years, the distinct lines of the boats from Harkers Island, Rose Bay and Manteo began to dot the waters of the Carolina sound country. Shad boats and sharpies, punts, and skiffs and skipjacks, each with its own style, form and function.

Back at Gull Rock, Mike Mullen knows all about them. A former ship-fitter, fisherman and finish-carpenter, he has spent more than a decade researching and caring for the wooden boats of the Pamlico Sound. Not far from where Joe Pugh worked in Gull Rock, Mullen has become the latest caretaker of Hyde's boat building tradition.

continued on next page

"This was the largest fishing boat at the Oregon Inlet fishing center in 1935," he says, patting the hull of the 31-foot shad boat as others might caress the flanks of a thoroughbred. "Here, let me show you another," he says, leading the way across the yard to a tiny little skiff aging quietly under the swaying pines.

Each boat or hull has a story, and Mullen seems to know them all. He points to different ones, retracing their history by their construction and modifications. New boards to raise the sides of the boat here, modifications to a World War II carburetor to save gas and money there, he talks about each with the relaxed, easy style of a master.

"I've looked at so many of these boats, and I've fixed so many of these boats, that you get to a point where you just know what's there," he says quietly.

It takes a lot of time, practice and patience to revive the old boats and make them seaworthy again. Mullen prefers to work alone, with a little help from his wife, Joan, from time to time. He admits the tasks can sometimes be formidable. "It's pretty hard until you get done," he laughs.

Mullen says he's built some new boats, but spends more and more time repairing and restoring existing vessels. From commercial work boats to 90-year- old skipjacks, he says he ends up doing a little bit of everything.

"I was hoping to get more new [wooden boat] construction, but I've realized that you have to go where the demand is. A lot of people want a new fiberglass boat. These days, the big thing is speed and lightweight. Everybody wants to go fast now. I'd make a good living doing that, but that's all," he says.

"But there are a lot of folks, older people, who would like to have a wooden boat because they know the difference. A wooden boat is more comfortable. It rides better. And you catch more fish in it."

For some, the days of the old Hyde boats seem numbered. "The wooden boat is something I reckon is about becoming extinct," says Ross. "The materials are becoming scarce. The white cedar is really hard to find, and to find the grade of it you need. I can't foresee the wooden boat ever coming back. Just like the horse versus the automobile. The horse is still around, but not many people are going to be riding horses, they're going to be riding automobiles."

But Alford says the ebbs and flows of the boat building traditions of Hyde County and the other coastal areas of northeastern North Carolina will likely survive. As long as craftsmen like Mike Mullen, the current boat builder of Gull Rock, ply their trade, the sturdy old boats will live on to sail with the sons and grandsons of the coastland.

"It's a changing, living thing," Alford says. "To some people, it's on the decline, and it will die out. But taken on a broader view point, there will always be a demand for wooden boats."

"When somebody needed something, if they didn't have it, they improvised."

Robert Ross, boat builder, Lake Landing

Thomas Yocum is an author and journalist living on Ocracoke Island. He is editor and co-publisher of the Ocracoke Observer newspaper.

Returning your U.S. Census forms brings you direct benefits

An easy way to help your community this year is to fill out your U.S. Census form in March.

If you respond to this year's U.S. Census, rural North Carolina not only will be fully represented in Congress, but your fair share of federal tax dollars will come into your communities as well.

Required by the Constitution, the U.S. Census has been conducted every 10 years since 1790. It not only counts how many people live in the U.S., it also records where we live, so that Congressional districts can be accurately drawn. Additional information collected during the census, such as certain household characteristics, helps determine federal spending on education, health care, job training, emergency services, care for children, the elderly, the unemployed and underemployed. Also, the development of public transportation systems and traffic control are based on where people work and live.

Like voting, responding to the U.S. Census is voluntary. Only 65 percent of the possible population directly responded in 1990. A less-than-accurate accounting of where and how many people live in the state's communities results in an inaccurate representation in Congress and a disproportionate appropriation of federal programs.

All known households will receive a questionnaire in early to mid-March. Most questionnaires will contain seven questions that take about 10 minutes to answer. One in six households will get the "long form" questionnaire of 37 questions which takes about a half hour to answer.

The personal information you provide will not be made public. It is a violation of federal law to permit anyone to connect your answers with you.

The completed forms should be mailed back to the U.S. Census by April 1. No postage stamp is required.

The government is making great efforts this year to make sure everyone is included. The "Be Counted" program will put extra census forms in local places such as post offices, community centers and libraries in case the Census misses anyone in its mailings.

More than 200 special "questionnaire assistance centers" will be set up throughout the state to help people with language problems or disabilities. They will be sponsored by organizations and institutions — such as churches, civic groups, fraternities and sororities — that volunteer time and space to help make the census as complete as possible. And in mid-February, advance letters will go out to determine if families need bilingual census forms and information. A toll-free telephone assistance number printed on the census form will provide assistance in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Tagalog, as well as English.

Also, some forms will be hand-delivered to difficult to reach communities, such as farmworkers, migrant laborers, military personnel and children. Teams of U.S. Census employees will be assigned to try to locate families who may not have been reached.

This means courts of law, credit companies, solicitors, the police and military, the Internal Revenue Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, immigration and welfare agencies — nobody is permitted to see the information connected to you.

After you return your form, it will be sent to one of the Census Bureau's four processing centers, where workers will scan it directly into computers that can read responses. Within 10 to 15 days, it will be shredded. Your answers will be combined with those of other people to produce statistical summaries.

For more information, contact our regional U.S. Census office: 1-877-344-6493

Or visit the Web site at www.census.gov

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Reading the body's electrical currents

The science of electroneurodiagnostics

END Instructor Barbara Thorpe (far right) assists students in reading the results of EEG testing.

Electrical current controls the fan in your oven, the alternator in your car, the alarm next to your bed, the nerves in your spinal cord . . . .

The nerves in your spinal cord?

Yes, and the rest of your body as well. Electrical current passes through the human body as easily as it does through the copper wiring in your house – and not just when you stick your finger in a plug receptacle, either. The brain sends electrical current to tell your muscles to contract or extend, allowing you to lift that early morning cup of coffee. It sends current to tell your heart when to beat and your skin when to perspire. Every system in the body is controlled by electrical current.

If the electrical system fails, the result is seizures, heart problems, Alzheimer's disease, sleep disorders and any number of other neurological problems. Failure can be the result of stress, disease, traumatic injury or age.

These problems are as old as the human brain itself, but the science of electroneurodiagnostics (reading the body's electrical currents) is new. Electroneurodiagnostic (known as END) technologists are trained to record electrical activity from patients' nervous systems and then use that data to diagnose problems. They also assist neurosurgeons during delicate spinal cord operations and are often used in the operating room to help monitor patients during many types of surgery.

One of the more visible (and rapidly growing) roles of the END technologist is in the field of sleep studies. Many medical conditions have been traced back to sleep problems. Louise Simpson, the supervisor of the Neurophysiology/Sleep Disorder Lab at Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Greenville, N.C., says, "The sleep field is growing. It's new. It only came about in the last 10 to 15 years. In the last two to three years, it's become very public. News magazines on TV have done a number of stories on it. People used to just live with the disorder because they thought is was the way it is supposed to be. Like snoring. People say, 'Well, I snore. That's just the way it is.' But it is a disorder really that can be treated."

She also stresses how labs like the one at Pitt change peoples' lives. "Sleep deprivation is such a hazard. Just think how dangerous it is for truck drivers, airplane pilots, people who

By Mike Crisp

work odd hours and are responsible for hundreds of lives sometimes. I'm a big sleep advocate. We're a 24-hour nation. There's a lot of people doing shift work, and they need their sleep."

Technologists are needed

There are only 12 accredited colleges in the nation where students can earn a degree or certificate in electroneurodiagnostics. Weigh this against the incredible need for technologists at hospitals in virtually every community, and it's easy to see the opportunities for someone with electroneurodiagnostic training are tremendous.

In the Mid-Atlantic region, the only END training program is located at Southwestern Community College (SCC) in Sylva, N.C. SCC graduates are currently working in hospitals and sleep labs all over the region. Simpson says, "We have three SCC graduates. One has worked here for four years, another has worked here for three, and the other one has been here for over two years. We added a new position, and we were hoping to get another student from SCC. But there aren't enough technologists to go around right now."

Barbara Thorpe, the END program director at SCC, says her program usually has between 10 and 15 students enroll each year. And when they graduate, they are ready. She said, "Students have to be independent thinkers, they have to be experts in their field and they have to be highly professional." Thorpe has actually terminated a student for unprofessional behavior.

Students begin their path to obtaining END certification by learning the basics – of electricity, that is. In their first semester, students are required to take Basic Electricity with Ron Poor, an electronics engineering technology instructor at SCC. This serves two purposes. First, it teaches students the terminology and basic knowledge of electrical power. Second, END technologists have to rely upon their equipment. If something stops working in the operating room, it is the tech's responsibility to fix it.

During their second semester, students at SCC take yet another electricity course, this time with Barbara Thorpe, who teaches them to apply what they have learned to their job. They also take several other neurology courses, anatomy and physiology and basic CPR.

During their third semester, students get the chance to practice what they learned. Thorpe places students at clinical sites. These sites have been chosen carefully and must meet the following criteria: 1) The site must be a major medical location where all neurological tests are performed; 2) The supervisor must be a registered END technologist; and 3) the site must express an interest in teaching. Thorpe tries to send each student to a different hospital, forcing the student to act independently and giving that student the greatest exposure possible to the real world of electroneurodiagnostics. Clinical sites that currently train SCC students include: Athens Regional Medical Center in Athens, Ga.; Baptist Hospital in Winston Salem; Carolina Medical Center in Charlotte; Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville; Northside Hospital in Atlanta; Pitt County Memorial Hospital in Greenville; High Point Regional Medical Center in High Point; Margaret Pardee Sleep Center in Hendersonville; Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston; Riverside Hospital in Newport News, Va.; and V.A. Medical Center in Durham.

Students at Southwestern prepare the patient for an EEG.

Think of the body's nervous system as some miniature power grid, keeping the body functioning much the same way an electric cooperative maintains a community.

"The students are academically strong," Thorpe says, "not just in neurology, but in English, anatomy and physiology, math and diseases of the body as well. This makes them good employees." The program is hard, and, according to Thorpe, it produces the best because of that.

It's hard to think of the body as producing electricity – the nervous system as some miniature power grid, keeping the body functioning much the same way an electric cooperative maintains a community. The electroneurodiagnostic field is still young. More and more, hospitals are hiring END techs to fill key roles in operating rooms and sleep labs. And institutions like Southwestern Community College are training the people to fill those roles.

For more information about the END program at SCC, call Barbara Thorpe at 1-800-447-4091, ext. 309.

The hanging and further escapades of George Cunningham

As retold by Charles Joyner

George Cunningham of Henderson County was 20 years old when he was hanged on July 9, 1875, for killing a man in Buncombe County with an ax. There is a tombstone with his name on it in Patty's Chapel Cemetery near Fletcher, south of Asheville. But according to family members living today, Cunningham lived to marry and raise a family in Texas, where he died many years later.

As a young man he was known as "Bud" Cunningham, a popular member of a well-connected family. His father, Captain Solomon Cunningham, had been killed while serving as a Confederate officer. His mother was a sister of Dr. George Washington Fletcher, a graduate of the Medical College of Charleston and a Civil War veteran.

Bud had been a drover since he was 16, driving a wagon up and down the mountains to Old Fort, bringing goods for the family store in Fletcher on the return trip. It was on June 6, 1874, that he got into a card game with a stranger, Daniel Sternberg from Kansas, at a campground near Swannanoa.

According to newspaper accounts and court records, Cunningham told the Buncombe County sheriff he shared a jug of corn whiskey that the stranger provided. "I won all his money and then his watch," he said. "He grabbed the money off the ground and called me a cheat. That made me good and mad. I picked up an ax and told him, 'Nobody calls me a cheat and gets away with it.' He grabbed the ax. I hit him in the head with it and it killed him."

Cunningham said that when he realized the man was dead he threw the body in the river, hitched up his mules and started home. When he was arrested the next day, he had Sternberg's gold watch in his possession. He was held in the Asheville jail.

His uncle, Dr. Fletcher, is said to have offered his nephew's weight in gold if the court would release him. The offer was refused. Cunningham had been moved to the Madison County jail in Marshall after talk circulated that his friends were going to storm the Asheville jail. The man was convicted of first-degree murder with the motive of robbery, and sentenced to hang.

To conduct a public hanging, you need a place to do it. Young Cunningham's uncle kindly offered to pay for it. So they built a scaffold on a platform within a 20- by 30-foot pen surrounded by a board fence 15 feet high.

Newspapers reported that on the day of the hanging, the young man made a farewell address to a crowd of some 1,500 people, warning against the evils that could result from drinking and gambling. Those outside the fence said that Cunningham fell when the trap door sprung. A doctor, later identified as Dr. Fletcher, called out, "He's dead! Cut him down!"

A few minutes later, a wagon bearing a coffin was driven rapidly through the crowd, headed toward Asheville.

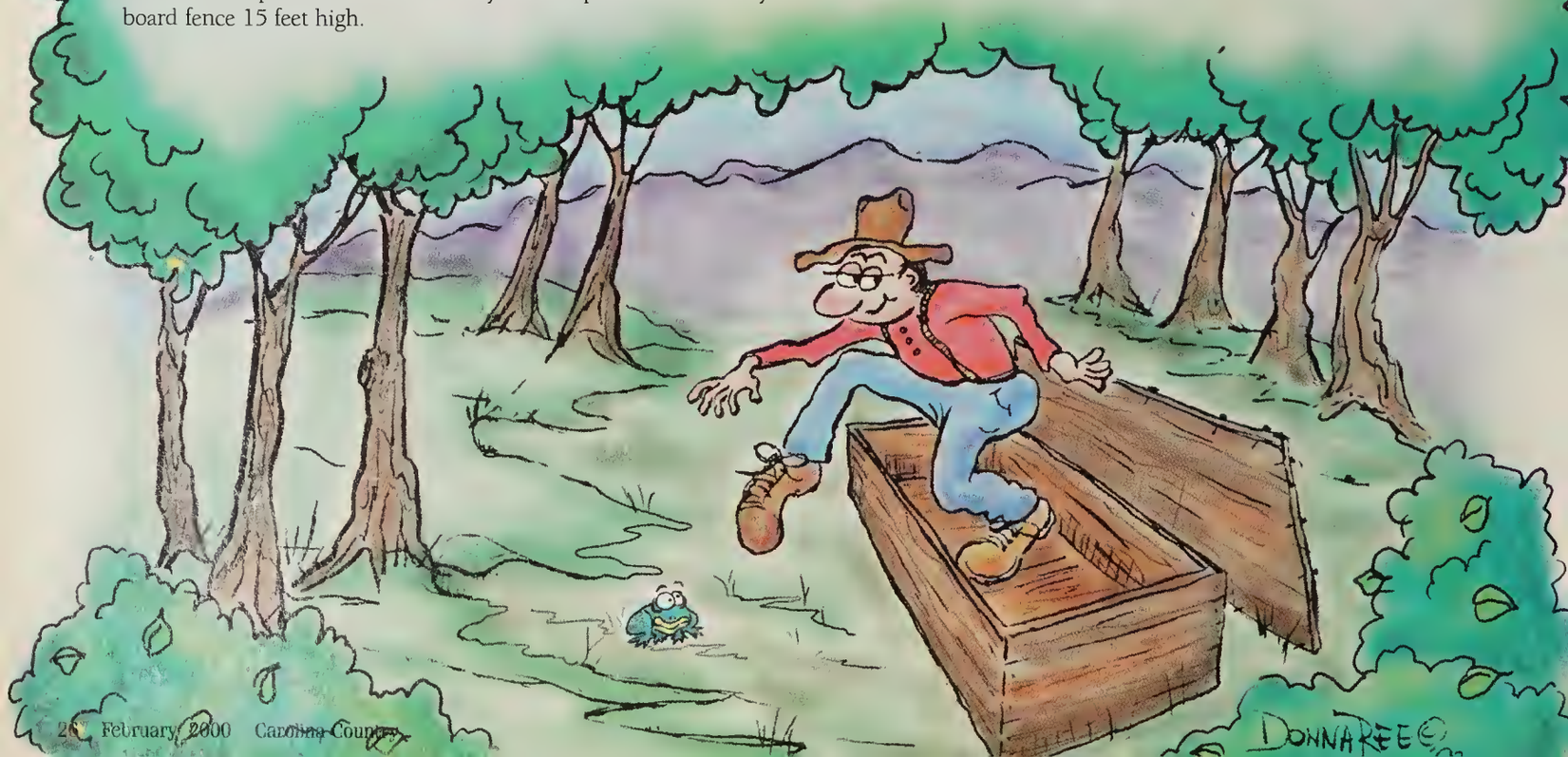
Pretty soon, rumors began to circulate that Cunningham was not dead. A group of men were said to have followed the wagon into a patch of woods, where they saw a man get out of the coffin.

Eighty-four years later, almost to the day, on July 17, 1959, the rumors were confirmed. Family members had decided it was time to find out if George Cunningham really was in that coffin in Patty's Chapel Cemetery. Dr. David Pierce, chemistry professor at Asheville-Biltmore College (now UNC-Asheville), was appointed to head a committee to open the grave.

No remains of a human being were found in the pine casket, but there was a considerable amount of oak wood, covered with bark. The only other item found was a glass bottle inscribed, "Hoyt's German Cologne." A first cousin of George Cunningham, Walter Fletcher, who was 83 years old in 1959, recalled that in the days before embalming fluid was used in the mountains, undertakers dashed perfume on corpses. He surmised that the fake funeral was made to smell, as well as look, natural.

This story is one of nine told in "Twice Told TalesTWICE TOLD TRUE TALES OF THE BLUE RIDGE & GREAT SMOKIES, published in 1995 by Harmon Den Press, 221 Ewbank Drive, Hendersonville, NC 28791 ($7.95). The author is Mead Parce, retired editor of the Hendersonville Times-News.

And what became of George Cunningham? In 1986, Mead Parce speculated to Mrs. Edna Justus of Edneyville, a member of the Cunningham family, that George, like many others of his generation who got into trouble at home, may have gone to Texas. "You guessed it," Mrs. Justus told him.



"Feel Fat? Vinegar Helps Shed Unwanted Pounds."

If you want to lose weight and keep it off -- hate dieting and are tired of taking pills, buying costly diet foods or gimmick "fast loss" plans that don't work-- *you'll love the easy Vinegar way to lose all the pounds you want to lose. And keep them off!*

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Since ancient times apple cider vinegar has been used in folk remedies to help control weight and speed-up the metabolism to burn fat. And to also aid overall good health.

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Simply write "Vinegar Diet" on a piece of paper and send it with your check or money order of only $19.95 plus $2 shipping and handling to the publisher: The Vinegar Diet, Dept. FD3490, 718 - 12th Street N.W., Box 24500, Canton, Ohio 44701.

You can charge to your VISA/ MasterCard by mail. Simply include your card number and its expiration date. And to start losing pounds even faster-- credit card orders only can phone Toll Free 1-800-772-7285, Ext. FD3490.

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Above statements are extracted from letters received by the publisher from readers

** Testimonials are atypical, your weight loss may be more or less.*

Carolina Close-Up

Compiled by Renee Gannon

Conservation trust funds protect 1,223 acres of farmland from development

Grants totaling $425,000 from the N.C. Farmland Preservation trust fund will be made to protect 1,223 acres of farmland from development in five N.C. counties this year. The funds were appropriated from the N.C. General Assembly as a demonstration of how land could be set aside from development in areas of rapid urban expansion.

The acres are located in Wake, Cabarrus, Forsyth, Rutherford and Randolph/Chatham counties. In two cases the conservation easements were donated to land conservation groups and grants covered surveying and other real estate transfer costs. In other cases, grant money bought the development rights. Some farms were completely covered by the conservation easements, other were only partially covered, leaving owners with the rights to develop a portion of the land.

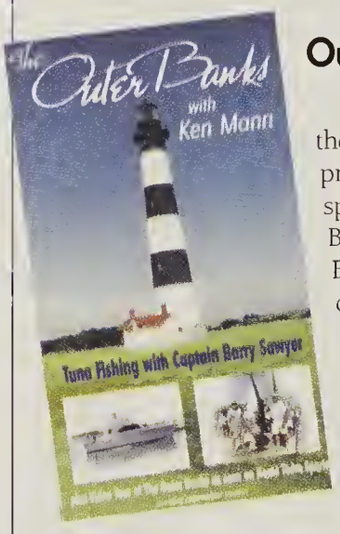
Three other land parcels in Hoke and Watauga counties were deferred for future consideration due to lack of development pressure. "I hope we have proven we can safeguard the rural lands of North Carolina through expenditure of these grants," said N.C. Ag Commissioner Jim Graham, whose department coordinated the program. "This program needs to be expanded and funded at a much higher level to ensure we have enough land available to provide food and fiber we need, and farmers won't be tempted to bow to development pressures and high dollar land sales of their fertile lands."

Full-color brochure highlights the state's signature gardens

In "Heritage Gardens of North Carolina – Let the Journey Unfold," the N.C. Division of Tourism offers visitors information on 54 signature gardens and/or horticultural displays across the state. From the mountains, through the heartland, to the coast, people have tended the land for both sustenance and beauty.

The full-color, 38-page brochure features gardens at the Biltmore Estate, the N.C. Arboretum, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, the JC Raulston Arboretum at N.C. State University, N.C. Botanical Garden and Coker Arboretum, Old Salem, Reynolda Gardens at Wake Forest University, the Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Elizabethan Gardens on Roanoke Island, Orton Plantation Gardens and the Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens.

To receive a brochure, call 1-800-VISITNC or visit the Web site www.visitnc.com.



Outer Banks travel show released on video

When "The Outer Banks with Ken Mann" Tuna Fishing Special aired on the Home Team Sports Channel, viewers began requesting copies of the program. Coastal Broadcasting Company released the video last fall in response to demands. In addition to showcasing tuna fishing off the Outer Banks, the video also features the famous Outer Banks lighthouses, Wright Brothers Memorial, Jockey's Ridge State Park, the N.C. Aquarium and other area sights.

The video retails for $15.95 and is available at various gift shops and marinas on the Outer Banks, or through mail order by sending $15.95 plus $2 shipping and handling to Coastal Broadcasting Company, 637 Harbor Road, Wanchese, NC 27981. Or visit the Web site www.outerbanksnews.com.

MerleFest 2000 songwriting contest accepts entries

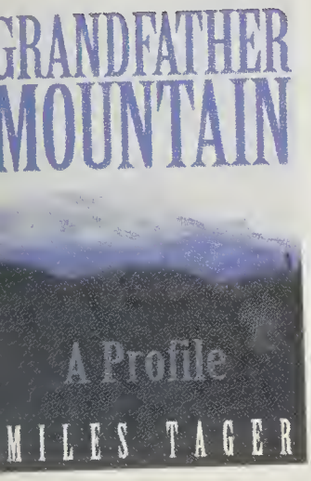
MerleFest 2000 organizers named RCA recording artist John Lauderdale as Honorary Chairperson of the Chris Austin Songwriting Contest for this year's music festival. Anyone interested in competing must submit entries on audiotape for the contest by March 18. Lauderdale will select a panel of Nashville music industry figures to evaluate all the taped entries. The panel will choose three finalists in each of the four categories: bluegrass, country, gospel and general. Finals will take place at MerleFest on April 28 with songwriters performing for festival judges. Finalists receive tickets for the festival and lodging. They will compete for prizes, including cash and Epiphone Guitars from Gibson. The first place contestants will perform for the main stage audience. The MerleFest 2000 will be held April 27-30 in Wilkesboro.

For entry information, call (800) 799-3838 or visit the Web site www.merlefest.org. All entries must be submitted on tape with entry fee and an official entry form to The Chris Austin Songwriting Contest, PO Box 121855, Nashville, TN 37212.

NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development

Doc Watson performing at MerleFest

"Grandfather Mountain: A Profile" tells history of this state landmark

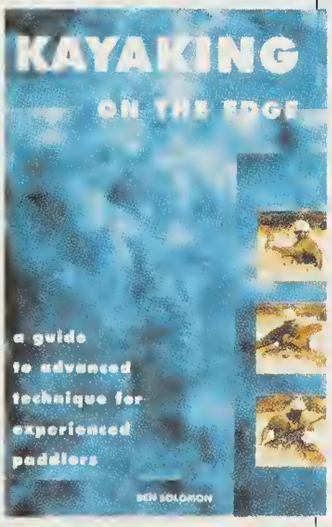


Grandfather Mountain is one of the most unique geological, ecological and historical mountains on the earth. "Grandfather Mountain: A Profile" tells the history of this oldest and highest mountain in the Blue Ridge Mountain range. Author Miles Tager traces the mountain's history from its formation nearly a billion years ago through its natural history to the present day.

Grandfather Mountain has attracted some of the foremost natural scientists in America, including John Lawson, William Bartram, Andre Micheaux, John Fraser and Asa Gray. As the home to a wide diversity of flora and fauna, the mountain has become a symbol of the struggle between growth and preservation in fragile natural areas like the North Carolina High Country.

"Grandfather Mountain: A Profile" costs $14.95. It is available at local bookstores or by ordering directly from the publisher at Parkway Publishers, Inc., 3678 Boone, NC 28607, or phone or fax (828) 265-3993 or (800) 821-9155. Credit cards are accepted. Shipping and handling $4. N.C. residents add 6 percent sales tax.

New book takes serious kayakers beyond the basics



Whitewater kayaking continues to evolve as a sport. New boat designs are constantly being produced, allowing paddlers to try new tricks. Rapids once considered out of bounds are now considered "runnable". And rodeo and creek boats have opened a whole new world to kayakers. In "Kayaking on the Edge: A Guide to Advanced Technique for Experienced Paddlers," author Ben Solomon takes kayakers beyond the basics most how-to books cover. "My book teaches paddlers how to really have fun with the river, how to finesse a run, not just survive it," he says. Solomon spends eight months a year at the Nantahala Outdoor Center in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina. But he also kayaks all over the world. He is on the professional US kayaking rodeo circuit as a member of Team Dagger.

The 224-page book is complete with illustrations and photographs. It retails for $14.95. To order call Menasha Ridge Press at (800) 247-9437.

"The Wedding Party" by Dindga McCannon

African American quilt exhibit at Mint Museum of Craft + Design

The rich diversity of approaches to contemporary quiltmaking by African American artists is featured in the exhibit "Spirits of the Cloth: Contemporary African American Quilts" at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design in Charlotte, February 5-April 30. "The Wedding Party," by Dindga McCannon (above), is just one of the 50 quilts on display that uses a wide variety of materials and techniques, from abstract patterns to figurative works with personal, family and cultural narratives. McCannon's work is a quilted page from a family photo album. The exhibit, organized by the American Craft Museum, features the works of 30 members of the Women of Color Quilter's Network (an organization of 1,200 male and female quilters nationwide). The Mint Museum of Craft + Design is located at 220 Tryon Street, Charlotte. Admission is $6 adults, $4 seniors and students, and free for members and children 12 years and under. For more information, contact the museum at (704) 337-2000 or visit the Web site www.mintmuseum.org.

Iredell County company has ties to America's Cup world sailing competition

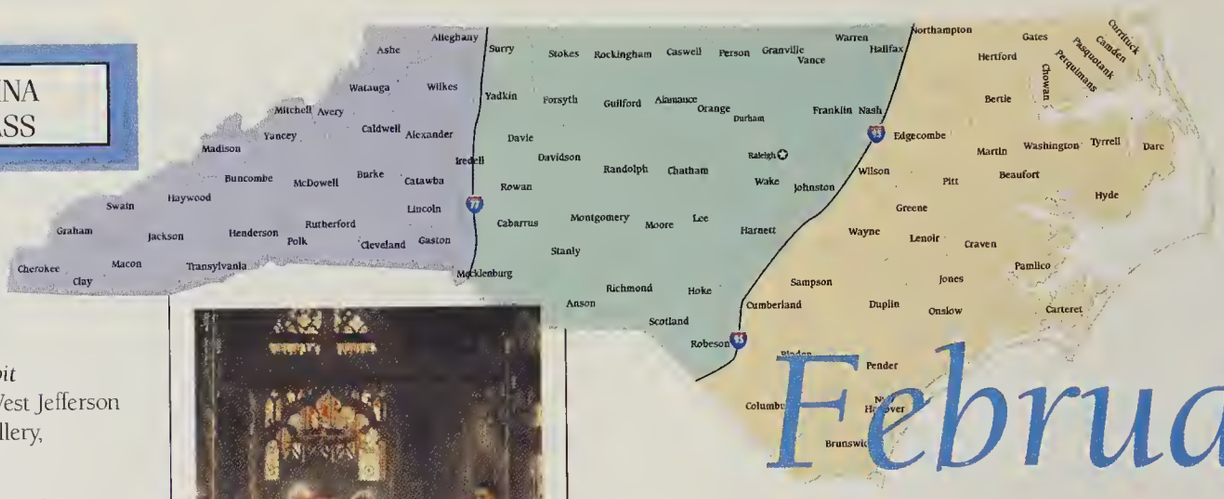
Dennis Conner of Stars & Stripes

Not only is John Boyle & Company, Inc. of Statesville an official supporter of the U.S. entry, The Stars & Stripes (with Dennis Conner at the helm), in the America's Cup 2000 sailing competition in New Zealand, it also provided fabric for the yacht's hull. The fabric protects the hull and also hides the yacht's keel and rudder configuration from the competition.

Conner and his Stars & Stripes team have used other John Boyle products extensively over the years. The 2000 America's Cup is the 30th anniversary of the series. John Boyle & Company is celebrating 140 years as the oldest and foremost producer of specialty fabrics for the marine, tent and awning industry.

America's Cup preliminary competition was held in January. The winner will face New Zealand for the America's Cup final challenge later this year. For more information, visit the Web sites www.johnboyle.com and www.stars-stripes.com.

Carolina Compass



February

Mountains

Millenium Art Exhibit
Through Feb. 18, West Jefferson
Ashe Arts Center gallery,
(336) 246-ARTS

War & Rememberance: A Love Story from the Civil War
Feb. 1-29, Smyrna, TN
Valentine's exhibit, Sam Davis
Memorial Home, (888) 750-9524

Black Bears: Fact and Folklore
Feb. 8, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife
Education, free, (828) 877-4423

Hammered Dulcimer Workshop
Feb. 12, Chimney Rock
Chimney Rock Park, $28,
9 a.m.-12 p.m., (828) 625-9611,
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Salamanders: Some Like It Cold
Feb. 19, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife
Education, 1:30-4:30 p.m., free,
(828) 877-4423

Beeswax Candle Making Workshop
Feb. 20, Chimney Rock
Chimney Rock Park, $36,
10 a.m.-12 p.m., (828) 625-9611,
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Kudzu Wreath and Basket Making Workshop
Feb. 27, Chimney Rock
Chimney Rock Park, $25,
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., (828) 625-9611, www.chimneyrockpark.com

Piedmont

Presidential China
Through March 26,
Winston-SalemExhibit, Old Salem,
(336) 721-7329

African Art Exhibit
Through March 26, Chapel Hill
Ackland Art Museum, UNC
campus, (919) 966-5736

African-American Arts Festival
Through March 18, Greensboro
Throughout city, (336) 373-7523

"We Shall Overcome: 1954-1968"
Through March 19, Greensboro
Photo exhibit, Greensboro
Historical Museum,
(336) 373-2043

Victorian Narrative Paintings
Through Apr. 2, Charlotte
Forbes Collection, Mint Museum
of Art, (704) 337-2000,
www.mintmuseum.org

The Giant Maze
Through May 20, Greensboro
Maze, puzzles, brainteasers,
Natural Science Center of
Greensboro, (336) 288-3769

Wood Art Exhibit
Through June, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Craft + Design,
(704) 337-2000

"Theology and Art"
Feb. 1, Winston-Salem
Lecture, Reynolda House, $2,
8 p.m., (336) 725-5325,
www.reynoldahouse.org

Sit-In Movement Events
Feb. 1-6, Greensboro
40th anniversary, (336) 274-9199

Groundhog Day
Feb. 2, Raleigh
Sir Walter Wally emerges, NC
Museum of Natural Sciences,
(919) 733-7450,
www.naturalsciences.org

Groundhog Day
Feb. 2, Greensboro
Natural Science Center of
Greensboro, 10 a.m.,
(336) 288-3769

Southern Farm Show
Feb. 2-4, Raleigh
NC State Fairgrounds,
(800) 849-0248,
www.southernshows.com

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus
Feb. 2-6, Greensboro
Greensboro Coliseum,
(336) 373-3400

"The Secret Rapture"
Feb. 2-6, Greensboro
Thriller, Curry Auditorium,
UNC-G, (336) 334-4849

Music of Copland
Feb. 4, Greensboro
Concert, Christ United Methodist
Church, (336) 855-5775

Heart of Carolina Jazz Orchestra
Feb. 5, Sanford
Temple Theatre, $10, (919)774-4512

Carolina Wedding Show
Feb. 5, Greensboro
Greensboro Coliseum Complex,
(336) 33-BRIDE

Chinese New Year Festival
Feb. 5, Greensboro
Greensboro Cultural Center,
11 a.m.-5 p.m., (336) 373-2044

"Curious George"
Feb. 5 & 7, Greensboro
Kids musical, Carolina Theatre,
(336) 333-2605

Symphony Concert
Feb. 5 & 7, Greensboro
War Memorial Auditorium,
(336) 335-5456

Valentine Workshop
Feb. 6, Winston-Salem
For children with an adult,
Reynolda House, reservations
required, 2-4 p.m., $5, (336) 725-5325, www.reynoldahouse.org

"The Slow Way Back"
Feb. 6, Winston-Salem
Author reading, Reynolda House,
8 p.m., $2, (336) 725-5325,
www.reynoldahouse.org

Greensboro Big Band Concert
Feb. 6, Greensboro
St. Pius X Catholic Church,
3 p.m., (336) 373-2549

"Side by Side by Sondheim"
Feb. 6-7, 13-14, Greensboro
Musical, Temple Emanuel Social
Hall Theatre, 8 p.m.,
(336) 852-3578

Piano Concert
Feb. 7, Winston-Salem
Reynolda House, $10 adults, $5
students, 8 p.m., (336) 725-5325,
www.reynoldahouse.org

Your Two Cents
Feb. 7 & 14, Sedalia
African-American issues, Charlotte
Hawkins Brown Memorial State
Historic Site, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.,
(336) 449-4846

"Performing the Scriptures: The Improvisions of Jazz"
Feb. 8, Winston-Salem
Lecture, Reynolda House, $2,
8 p.m., (336) 725-5325,
www.reynoldahouse.org

"Stomp"
Feb. 8-9, Winston-Salem
Percussion show, Stevens Center, 8
p.m., $34, (336) 721-1945

"Cherish the Ladies"
Feb. 11, Winston-Salem
Concert of Irish music, dance
and humor, Stevens Center, $21,
8 p.m., (336) 721-1945

Bass & Saltwater Fishing Expo
Feb. 11-13, Greensboro
Greensboro Coliseum Complex,
(336) 373-3400

A Concert for Children
Feb. 12, Greensboro
Greensboro Ballet, Greensboro
Cultural Center, (336) 333-7480

David Dorfman Dance
Feb. 12, Greensboro
Carolina Theatre, 8 p.m.,
(336) 333-2605

"Like Father, Like Son? Portraits by Frans & Jans Hals"
Feb. 12-May 7, Raleigh
NC Museum of Art, (919) 839-6262

"Dolley Madison and the Uninvited Guests"
Feb. 12, Winston-Salem
Puppet Show, Old Salem Children's Museum, 11 a.m. & 3 p.m., (336) 721-6150

"Nepal: In the Shadow of Everest"
Feb. 13, Greensboro
Film, Carolina Theatre, 2:30 p.m., (336) 333-2605

Symphony Pops Concert
Feb. 14, Greensboro
War Memorial Auditorium, 8 p.m., (336) 335-5456

"Leslie Nielsen as Clarence Darrow"
Feb. 14, Greensboro
One-man play, Aycock Auditorium, UNC-G, (336) 334-4TIX

"Cinderella"
Feb. 14-18, Greensboro
Branch Theatre, (336) 378-9300

UNC-G Concert Band
Feb. 16, Greensboro
Aycock Auditorium, UNC-G, 7:30 p.m., (336) 334-4849

"Hay Fever"
Feb. 16-20, Greensboro
Comedy, Taylor Theatre, UNC-G, (336) 334-4849

"There Goes The Bride"
Feb. 16-20, 23-26, Greensboro
Comedy, Branch Theatre, (336) 378-9300

"Little Shop of Horrors"
Feb. 16-April 23, Greensboro
Musical, The Barn Dinner Theatre, (336) 292-2211

Karamu
Feb. 18, Greensboro
African marketplace, Greensboro Cultural Center, (336) 373-7523

Antique & Collectible Show
Feb. 18-20, Waxhaw
The Waxhaw Woman's Club building and the old Belk building, $3, (704) 843-2451

"Agnes of God"
Feb. 18-20, 24-27, Greensboro
Drama, Greensboro Cultural Center, (336) 333-7470

Old-Time Square Dance
Feb. 19, Denton
Denton Civic Center, 7-10:30 p.m., (336) 475-9397

"The First Ladies"
Feb. 20, Winston-Salem
Lecture, Old Salem MESDA Auditorium, $7, 3 p.m., (336) 721-7360

The Glenn Miller Orchestra
Feb. 20, Greensboro
Carolina Theatre, 3 p.m., (336) 333-2605

"A Turn in Time"
Feb. 20, Winston-Salem
NC writers reading, Reynolda House, $3, 3 p.m., (336) 725-5325, www.reynoldahouse.org

UNC-G Symphony Orchestra
Feb. 21, Greensboro
Aycock Auditorium, UNC-G, 7:30 p.m., (336) 334-4849

Philharmonic Hungarica
Feb. 23, Greensboro
Concert, Aycock Auditorium, UNC-G, 8 p.m., (336) 334-4TIX

"The King and I"
Feb. 24-27, High Point
Musical, High Point Community Theatre, (336) 882-2542

Northern Piedmont Specialty Crops School
Feb. 25, Oxford
Ramada Inn, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., (919) 603-1350

"Don Pasquale"
Feb. 25-27, Greensboro
Opera, War Memorial Auditorium, (336) 273-9472

NC Golf Show
Feb. 25-27, Greensboro
Greensboro Coliseum Special Events Center, (336) 373-3400

Ultracross Motorcycle Racing
Feb. 25-27, Greensboro
(336) 373-7400

"Cash on Delivery"
Feb. 25-March 12, Sanford
Comedy, Temple Theatre, $15 adults, $6 children, (919) 774-4512

Cultural Kaleidoscope
Feb. 25-March 17, Greensboro
Asian and African cultures, Greensboro Cultural Center, (336) 333-7485

Philharmonic Concert
Feb. 26, Greensboro
Philharmonic of Greensboro, Dana Auditorium, Guilford College, 8 p.m., (336) 373-2549

Southern Spring Show
Feb. 26-March 2, Charlotte
Charlotte Merchandise Mart, (800) 849-0248

Brown Memorial Singers Concert
Feb. 27, Sedalia
Charlotte Hawkins Brown Historic Site, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., (336) 449-4846

"Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad"
Feb. 27-28, Greensboro
Drama, Carolina Theatre, (336) 333-2605

"Smokey Joe's Café"
Feb. 29-March 5, Greensboro
Musical, Greensboro Coliseum Complex, (336) 373-7400

Coast

Obsolete Objects
Through Sept. 4, Wilmington
Obsolete everyday items, Cape Fear Museum, (910) 341-7413

"The Hole World"
Through Sept. 30, Wilmington
Underground animals exhibit, Cape Fear Museum, (910) 341-4350

George Gee and his Make-Believe Orchestra
Feb. 2, Wilmington
Swing Music, Thalian Hall, Mainstage, (910) 343-3664

NC Jazz Festival
Feb. 4-5, Wilmington
Wilmington Hilton Riverside, (910) 763-8585

Lawn & Garden Show
Feb. 5-6, Wilmington
Coast Line Convention Center, (910) 763-6739

Coastal Environmental Issues
Feb. 9, Beaufort
Lecture, NC Maritime Museum, 11 a.m., (252) 728-7317

"Arsenic and Old Lace"
Feb. 10-13, Wilmington
Comedy, Thalian Hall, (910) 343-3664

Shady Grove Bluegrass Band Concert
Feb. 11, Bayboro
Pamlico Co. High School Auditorium, $12, 8 p.m., (252) 249-3079

Gala 2000
Feb. 11, Wilmington
Heritage music, UNC-W, Kenan Auditorium, (910) 791-9262

Antique Show
Feb. 11-13, New Bern
Sudan Temple, $4.50, (252) 633-6448

"Gospel to Hip Hop"
Feb. 12, Wilmington
Wilmington Symphony Orchestra, UNC-W Kenan Auditorium, (910) 791-9261

Intercultural Celebration
Feb. 14-20, Wilmington
International films, lectures, dances, festival on 19th, UNC-W, (910) 962-7009

Steam Engines
Feb. 16, Beaufort
Demo and lecture, NC Maritime Museum, 11 a.m., (252) 728-7317

"You Can't Take It With You"
Feb. 16-20, 25-27, Wilmington
Comedy, Opera House Theatre Company, (910) 762-4234

"Much Ado About Nothing"
Feb. 19, Wilmington
Shakespearean comedy, UNC-W, Kenan Auditorium, (910) 791-9262

Ceilidh Festival
Feb. 26, Wilmington
Scottish festival, Elks Lodge, (910) 763-0000

Family Day
Feb. 26, Beaufort
Sea monsters and mysteries, NC Maritime Museum, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., (252) 728-7317

Moores Creek Battlefield Anniversary
Feb. 26-27, Currie
Revolutionary War battle, 10 a.m., (910) 283-5591, www.nps.gov/mocr

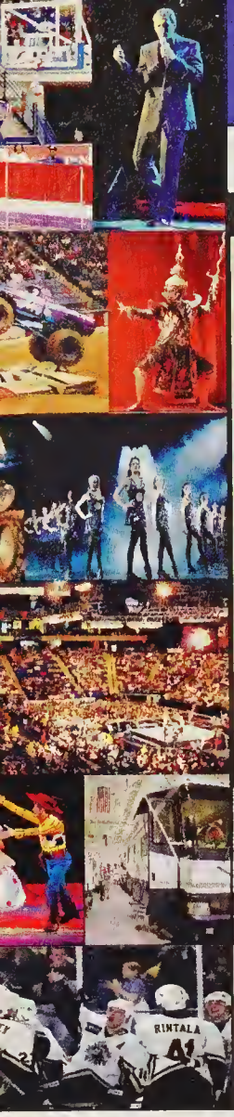
Artillery Demonstration
Feb. 27, Fort Fisher
(910) 458-5538

Academy of St. Martin in the Fields Concert
Feb. 28, Wilmington
Chamber orchestra, UNC-W, Kenan Auditorium, (800) 732-3643

Kirkin' O the Tartan
Feb. 28, Wilmington
Scottish church service, First Presbyterian Church, (910) 763-0000

Deadlines: April Feb. 20
A phone number must be included with event listings in order to be published.

Send notices to:
Carolina Country
P.O. Box 27306,
Raleigh, NC 27611
FAX: (919)878-3970
e-mail:carolinacountry@ncemcs.com



Let Us Entertain You!

FEBRUARY

DAY	DATE	EVENT	BUILDING
Thu	3	Hockey: Force vs. Huntsville	CL
Fri	4	Hockey: Force vs. Huntsville	CL
Sat	5	Elton John	CL
Sat	5	Mid South Wrestling	AR
Sat	5	Executive Unlimited	AD
Sat	5	Cape Feor Antique Show & Sale	AE
Sun	6	Cape Feor Anitque Show & Sale	AE
Fri	11	RV & Comping Show	AE
Fri	11	Foyetteville Acodemy Auction	HP
Fri	11	Hockey: Force vs. Columbus	CL
Sat	12	AAU Southern Notional Wrestling Tournoment	AR
Sat	12	RV & Comping Show	AE
Sun	13	Brion McKnight	AD
Sun	13	RV & Comping Show	AE
Sun	13	Hockey: Force vs. Wichito	CL
Thu	17	Children's Theoter	AD
Thu	17	Homier Distributing Co.	AE
Fri	18	Hockey: Force vs. Memphis	CL
Fri	18	Homier Distributing Co.	AE
Fri	18	All County Chorus	AD
Sat	19	Gospel Ploy	AD
Sat	19	Hockey: Force vs. Topeko	CL
Sat	19	Homier Distributing Co.	AE
Sun	20	Homier Distributing Co.	AE
Sun	20	Hockey: Force vs. Topeka	CL
Wed	23	The King & I - Broodway Series	AD
Thu	24	Cope Feor Form Credit	AE
Fri	25	All County Chorus	AD/AR
Sat	26	All County Chorus	AD/AR
Sat	26	Children's Somple Sales	AE

• CL-Crown Coliseum • AE-Expo Center
• HP-Hospitolity/Bollroom • AD-Auditorium
• AR-Arena • PL-Porking Lot • TC-Total Complex

Event dates are subject to change. Call the Coliseum Box Office to confirm dates and times.

ELTON JOHN
February 5

RV & CAMPING SHOW
February 12-13

FAYETTEVILLE FORCE HOCKEY
7 Home Games In February

WCW WRESTLING
March 4
Tickets On Sale February 5

For Tickets call the Coliseum Box Office 910-323-5088 or Ticketmaster 910-223-2900

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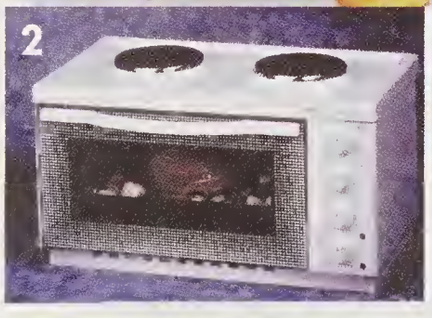
**12' x 24' oval pool (not pictured) Prior sales excluded.*

Installation and yard survey available in most areas - call to see if your homesite qualifies.

Cooking for One

A buyer's guide
By Sharon O'Malley

Sometimes a single serving is just enough. Whether you live alone or just dine solo while the family's out and about, these compact and convenient kitchen aides will make dinner for one a no-hassle, no-waste affair.



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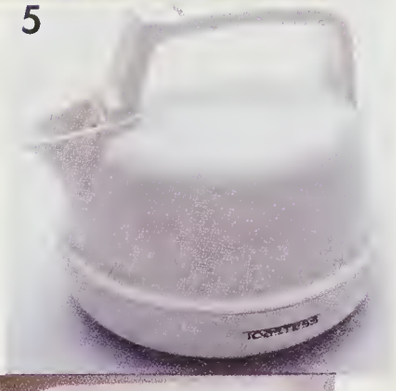


1. Quick chop

Why take up precious counter space in a small kitchen with a full-sized food processor when all you really need is to slice and dice a few veggies? Try Krups' Speedy Pro mini-chopper, a scaled-down version with a stainless steel, multi-purpose chopping blade that quickly and easily chops herbs, vegetables, chocolate, nuts and hard cheese. Its bowl holds 3 cups for chopping and 11 ounces of liquid. Find it at major department and specialty stores for around $45. Call (800) 526-5377.

2. All in one

It looks like a toaster oven but it's much more. Two electric burners top Avanti's Mini Kitchen TFL5, which comes equipped with an enamel roasting/broiling pan, an adjustable oven rack and a removable rotisserie. The convection oven has a 100-minute timer with automatic shut-off. It's also available with non-convection oven, without burners and without rotisserie, and sells for about $149 at appliance dealers and department stores. Call (800) 323-5029 or visit www.avantiproducts.com.

3. Fry, baby

When you want just a serving or two of fried chicken or French fries, slip a few morsels with some oil into Presto's Fry Baby electric deep fryer. The device automatically maintains correct frying temperature, so there are no controls to set. You can store oil in the fryer, which comes with a snap-on lid and a scoop for stirring, lifting and draining. It costs about $19.99 at Wal-Mart and Ace Hardware stores. Call (800) 877-0441.

4. Perfect fit

For a dorm room, office, camper, guest room or small kitchen, Samsung's Junior Microwave Oven fits right in. Measuring 0.3 cubic feet and weighing about 20 pounds, the microwave has an output of 500 watts to cook up a TV dinner, a slice of pizza, a cup of soup or microwave popcorn. It sells for around $69.95 at major department stores and from specialty catalogs. Call (800) 726-7864.

5. Tea time

For a quick cup of soup or instant coffee, fill Toastess' Mini-Kettle. It boils a liter of water faster than a microwave and has a large spout for easy filling and pouring. The kettle features a measurement window, a non-slip handle and an automatic safety shut-off. Look for it at Lechters, where it costs around $19.99. Call (514) 697-3320, ext. 235.

This guide is for informational purposes only and not intended as an endorsement by the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives.

JOYNER'S CORNER

Fifty States Criss-Cross Puzzle

© 1999 by Charles G. Joyner

4 Letters
IOWA
OHIO
UTAH

5 Letters
IDAHO
MAINE
TEXAS

6 Letters
ALASKA
HAWAII
KANSAS
NEVADA
OREGON

7 Letters
ALABAMA
ARIZONA
FLORIDA
GEORGIA
INDIANA
MONTANA
NEWYORK
VERMONT
WYOMING

8 Letters
ARKANSAS
COLORADO
DELAWARE
ILLINOIS
KENTUCKY
MARYLAND
MICHIGAN
MISSOURI
NEBRASKA
OKLAHOMA
VIRGINIA

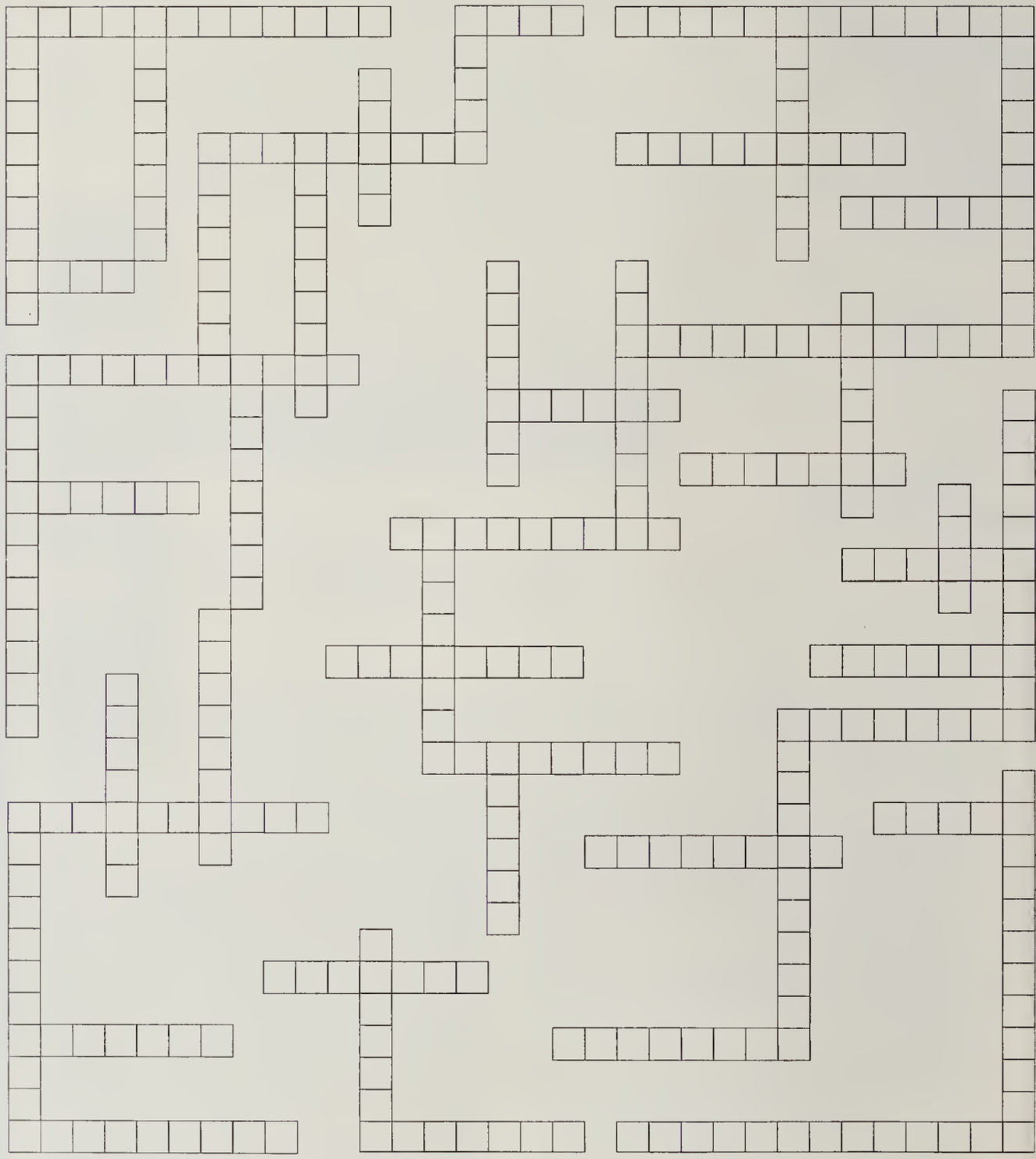
9 Letters
LOUISIANA
MINNESOTA
NEWJERSEY
NEWMEXICO
TENNESSEE
WISCONSIN

10 Letters
CALIFORNIA
WASHINGTON

11 Letters
CONNECTICUT
MISSISSIPPI
NORTHDAKOTA
RHODEISLAND
SOUTHDAKOTA

12 Letters
NEWHAMPSHIRE
PENNSYLVANIA
WESTVIRGINIA

13 Letters
MASSACHUSETTS
NORTHCAROLINA
SOUTHCAROLINA



Each of the 50 states has a place of its own in this diagram. But beware of false trails. One wrong entry will lead to another. Eliminate all alternative choices before making an entry. Then scratch the name of that state from the list. Note that states with two words in the name (such as North Carolina) are entered as one word.

Solution on page 43.

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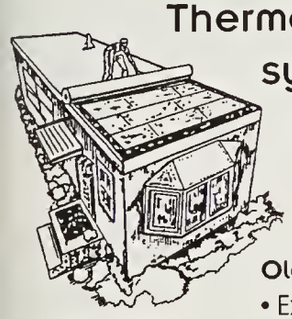

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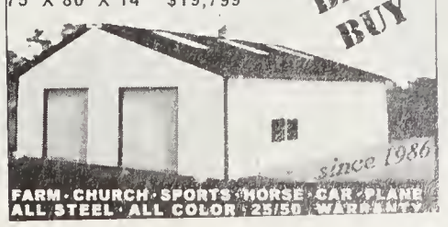

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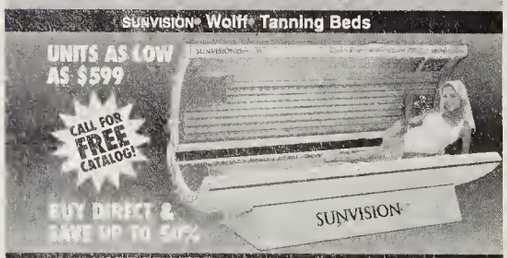

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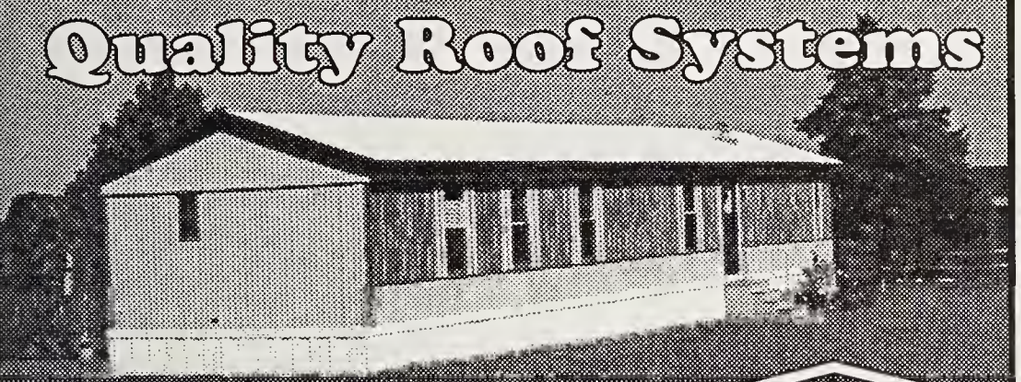

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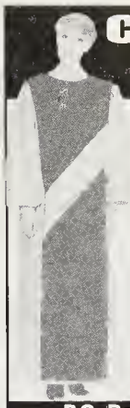

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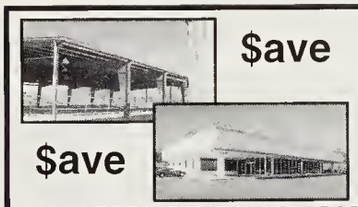

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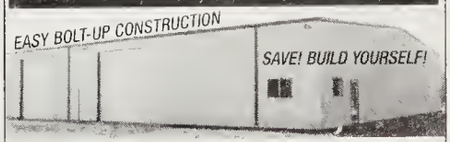

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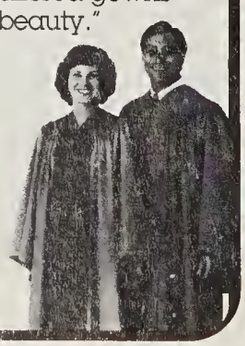

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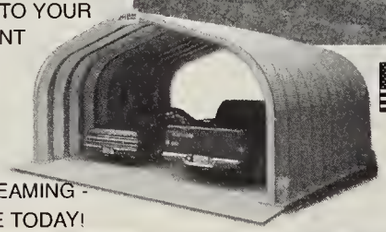

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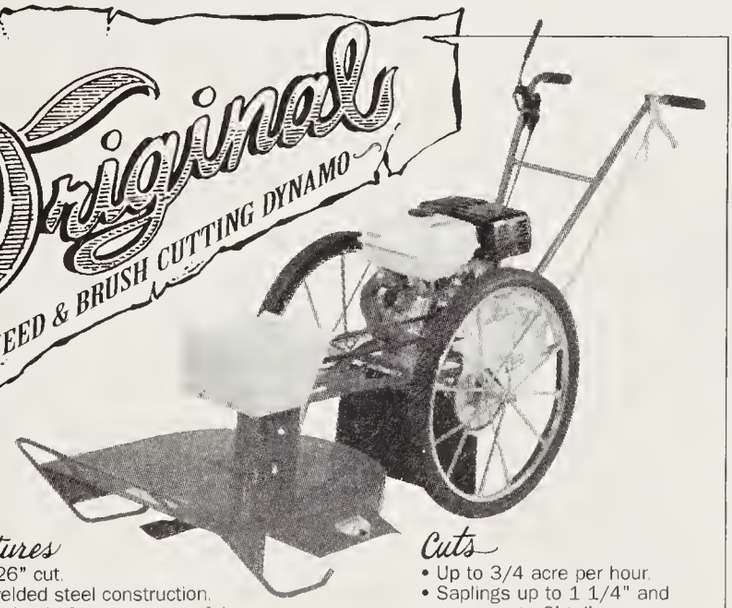

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ONLINE

The Mac is back

It's a lot easier to buy an Apple Macintosh personal computer than it used to be.

Personal Computing Advice
By Reid Goldsborough

Three years ago there was a confusing array of well over a dozen different Macs to choose from, one for every conceivable market and use, with little logic to the naming or configuration of the machines. What's more, it wasn't even clear that Apple would even be around in a few months.

Today, Steve Jobs and company have thoughtfully narrowed the choices down to four product families: consumer-level desktop and portable models and professional-level desktop and portable models. Despite nagging supply problems, Apple has had eight consecutive profitable quarters, and most analysts are bullish on its future. And Macs, like all computers, are less expensive than ever.

But for many computer buyers, questions still remain. Does it make sense to buy a Mac today? And, if so, what Mac should you buy?

To Mac, or not to Mac

Choosing a Mac means going against the grain. "Wintel" machines — personal computers running Microsoft Windows and powered by an Intel or compatible central processing unit — dominate the market. For every Mac that's sold, nearly 20 Wintel PCs are sold.

Yet Apple aficionados say the Mac has superior technology and is easier to use. The main reason is that many fewer companies are involved with its design and manufacture. "The Mac is a shadow of one man, Steve Jobs, while a Wintel machine is the creation of a committee that never meets," says Bob Sandler, president of the Mac special-interest group of the Philadelphia Area Computer Society.

The Mac's strengths have always been the desktop publishing and graphics market as well as the education market, and this continues today. But despite the greater availability of software and hardware peripherals for Wintel machines, there's relatively little in a business or home setting you can't do with a Mac.

Two rules of thumb can help you decide. One: First choose the software and peripherals you want, and then choose a hardware platform that will run them. And Two: If you or your children are already using a specific type of computer in one setting and you're planning to buy another computer to use in another setting, choose the same type of machine to minimize learning and compatibility problems.

Which Mac?

Apple made a big splash in August 1998 when it introduced the all-in-one iMac, a colorful machine that broke the mold of the drab beige PC with a detached monitor. Now available in five fruit-inspired colors plus graphite, the iMac is among the best-selling personal computer brands on the market.

The iMac is Apple's consumer-level desktop offering, and it comes in a standard version for $999 and two more powerful "DV" versions that excel in editing digital video, starting at $1,299. You can optionally add more memory to any of the units.

Apple's professional-level desktop PC, called the Power Mac G4, is more powerful, configurable, and upgradeable than the iMac. You can choose not only how much memory you want but also what size hard drive and monitor, the type of graphics card, and whether you want a CD-ROM drive or a more expansive DVD drive. The units start at $2,098.

The iBook, a consumer-level portable computer, is Apple's latest offering. Available in blueberry and tangerine, it's not something you'd buy to impress your blue-suited colleagues, and it's a tad too big to fit on an airplane tray. Targeted to students and home users, it features a convenient built-in carrying case, with a handle and rubber bumpers, and is priced at $1,599 and up.

Finally, the PowerBook G3 is the professional-level portable. It's both lighter and more powerful than the relatively heavy iBook and has a larger screen. As with its desktop equivalent, the Power Mac G4, the PowerBook G3 also gives you plenty of options when configuring and upgrading. Pricing starts at $2,499.

Apple has joined the direct-market bandwagon, and you can buy a Mac directly from either its Web site at http://store.apple.com or by phoning 800-MY-APPLE (800-692-7753).

New computer users often feel more comfortable buying in person, and Sandler of the Philadelphia Area Computer Society recommends the computer superstore Micro Center, with 15 locations throughout the country. Micro Center has a "store within a store" devoted to Macs, its salespeople are knowledgeable, and it often hires people from local computer user groups to offer buyers independent advice.

To comparison shop, you can also check with mail-order vendors such as MacConnection at http://macconnection.com and 800-800-2222, MacMall at http://macmall.com and 800-222-2808, and MacWarehouse at http://warehouse.com and 800-990-0718.

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book "Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway." He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or members.home.net/reidgold.

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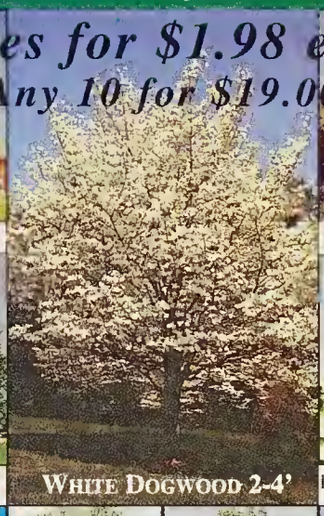
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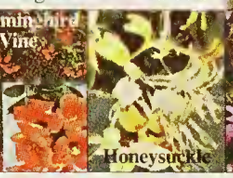
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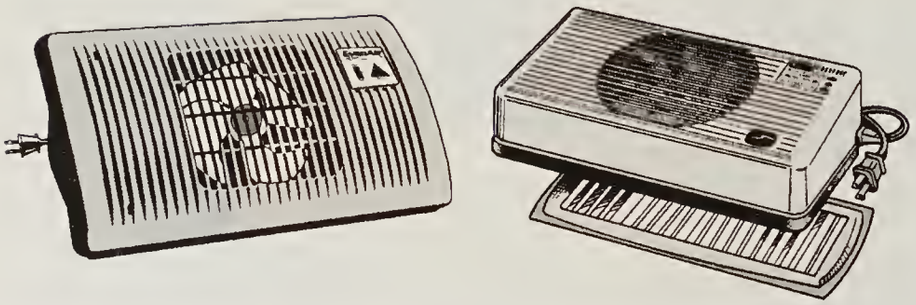
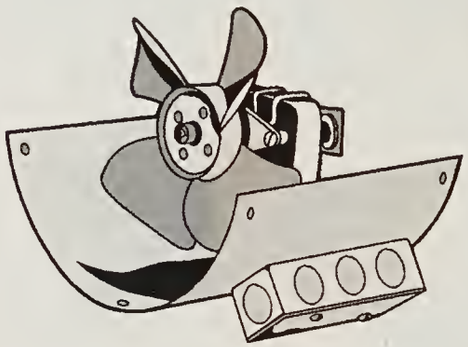
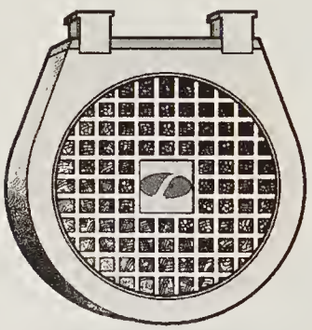


Two designs of booster fans that mount over room air registers



Various designs mount in ducts to bring more air to problem rooms



Hangs in door openings

Install booster fans for comfort, savings

Uneven heating and cooling in homes is very common. The problem can be particularly annoying in the winter because the windows in the chilly rooms tend to sweat excessively, and this can actually damage the building materials.

Having uneven temperatures is not only uncomfortable, but it is also costly. Typically, the person in the chilly rooms adjusts the furnace thermostat higher to make sure that the problem rooms feel comfortable. This means that the other rooms in your home are overly heated (or cooled in the summer), and needlessly drives up your utility bills year-round.

Luckily, there are several simple, no-cost furnace duct adjustments and low-cost do-it-yourself products available to minimize uneven room temperatures. By improving your comfort and allowing you to set your thermostat back to the proper level, these products can pay back their cost in a couple of months.

Try the no-cost duct balancing adjustment first. Check the position of the dampers in the ducts leading to the problem rooms. You will see a small handle on the main ducts if they have dampers (not all do). Make sure that the dampers are open.

In the fully-opened position, the adjustment handle is usually aligned with the duct. Wait about four hours for the temperatures to stabilize after an adjustment. If the temperatures are still uneven, slightly close the dampers to the warmest rooms. Don't close them too much or you many adversely affect the furnace efficiency.

If damper balancing does not help, consider installing a booster fan to force more heated air out into the problem rooms. The easiest design to install is a do-it-yourself automatic register booster fan (Equalizer by Suncourt or EvenAir by Field Controls).

These register fans are designed to fit over the room's hot air outlet register in the floor or wall. There is a small (100 to 250 cfm) fan built in the register that draws more heated (or cooled in the summer) air out into the room. They have attractive, contemporary designs and operate quietly.

When your furnace or heat pump starts, sensitive electronic controls inside of the register, detect the warmer air. This triggers the booster fan to start, drawing up to 50 percent more heated air into the room. Most models include an adjustable thermostatic control so, if the room is already warm enough, the fan will not start.

Keeping the doors open to the problem rooms will help, especially if your home lacks enough return air registers. With the doors open, consider installing a simple Air Mover or EntreeAir fan. These types of small fans mount in the upper corner of the door frame and help to circulate air between rooms.

Another effective option is to install a do-it-yourself booster fan inside the ducts leading to the problem rooms. There are many designs to fit standard rectangular or round sheet metal ducts. If you can cut a hole with tin snips, these are simple to install yourself.

These small duct fans use very little electricity, only about 30 watts. Most of them have automatic controls so that they start and stop when your furnace or heat pump blower starts and stops. If you are real handy, you can connect it to a room thermostat, too.

While not quite as effective as adjusting duct dampers, installing good quality adjustable room registers is an attractive option. Their louvers fit tightly to slow the air to the comfortable rooms and force more out into the problem rooms.

Some of these ornate cast metal or carved wooden registers are truly works of art. If you have allergies, several new registers have built-in, washable air filters. Some are scented with lemon, pine berry or apple cinnamon.

Before purchasing and installing any equipment, have your heating and cooling system checked out by a professional to make sure it is operating correctly and efficiently.

For a buyer's guide of automatic register and duct booster fans, filter and decorator registers, deflectors, sizes, features and prices, write for Utility Bills Update No. 665 (or instantly download at www.dulley.com). Please include $3 and a business-size SASE. Contact James Dulley, Carolina Country, P.O. Box 54987, Cincinnati, OH 45254

James Dulley is a syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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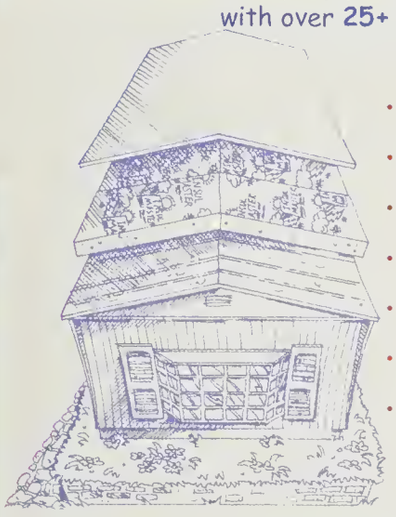

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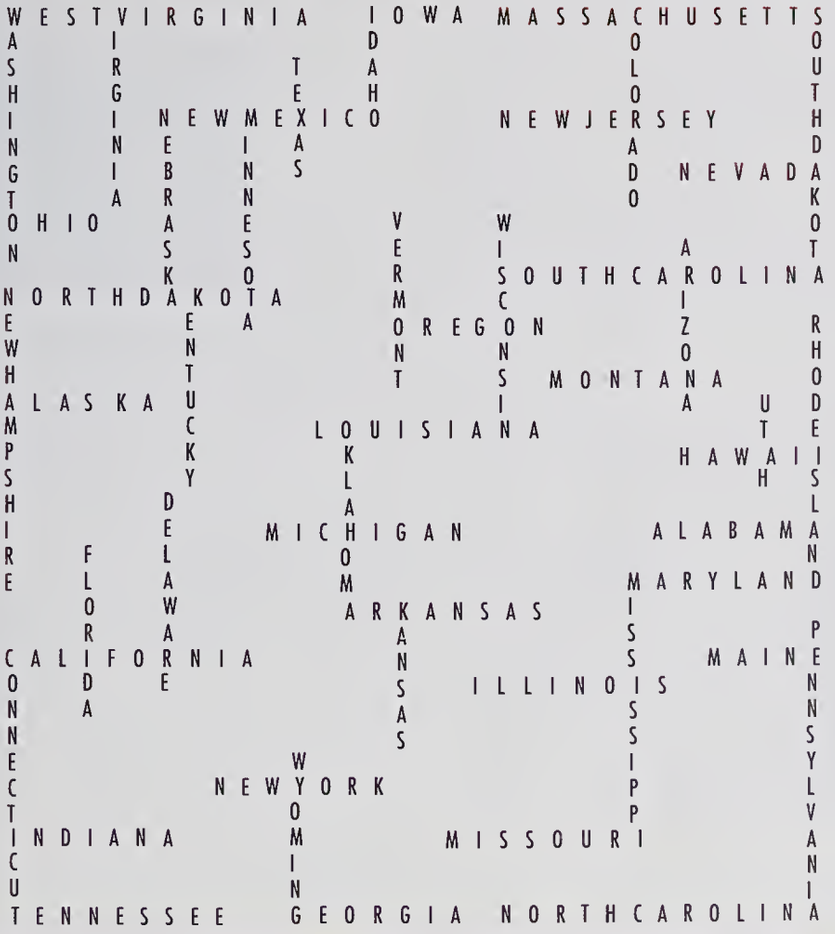

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Hank's Gardening Guide

By Hank Smith

As winter nudges into spring, take stock of any needed changes in landscape plantings. Overgrown shrubs tend to become bare at the base due to upper growth shading lower foliage. Tip or top pruning doesn't help them. Cutting back 12 to 14 inches from the ground will produce new growth low on the plants. This is especially desirable on hedge plants. Pruning has only a local effect. Old established plants such as Burford holly, cleyera, Japanese holly, pittosporum and similar shrubs should be pruned before mid-March.

February firsts

1. If they haven't been tip-pruned for Christmas decorations, prune hollies and boxwoods in late February or early March when most frigid temperatures are abating.

2. Deep-feed trees. Surface feeding usually benefits only the grass or groundcovers.

3. House plants are in semi-dormant stage. Overwatering can result in unhealthy plants.

4. Examine corms, tubers and roots stored last fall. Check those such as dahlia and begonia tubers, canna and caladium roots, and gladiolus corms. Cut away any rot or soft spots. Allow to dry, then dust with sulfur before returning to storage.

5. Take time to prepare a good planting hole for shrubs and trees. They never can be any better than the hole in which they grow.

6. Shrubs that bloom in mid to late summer such as vitex, eleagnus, crape myrtle and althea should have any necessary pruning before spring's warm weather arrives.

7. Increase stock of perennials by digging/dividing/resetting these: chrysanthemums, daylily, shasta daisy, aster, coreopsis and gaillardia.

8. Pinch away any new leaf growth appearing around azalea blooms. If allowed to mature, such growth often diverts energy from developing flowers.

9. Dense growth inside camellia plants will contribute to the formation and spread of scale. Thin out to allow free circulation of air.

Prune soon

Vitex, crape myrtle, eleagnus, althea and buddleia (butterfly bush) should be pruned this month. Buddleia can be cut back severely to within a few inches of the ground, if the plant is badly overgrown. In coastal areas, now's the time to prune oleander.

Azalea care

Plants can suffer from over-fertilization. Yellowing leaves with green veins usually indicate too much fertilizer, poor underground drainage or nematode damage. In most cases, it is best to make a number of split applications of fertilizer rather than one heavy application each year. Many azalea specialists make a light application in March, May and June each year. Take care not to apply too much fertilizer to small plants. For example, a plant less than a foot in height should receive only a heaping tablespoon at each application. Scatter fertilizer evenly on the mulch beneath the plant. Soak in with a heavy application of water. This reduces the possibility of fertilizer injury.

Till your vegetable garden

When the ground is unfrozen, till or spade your vegetable garden. Let it lie fallow until spring planting.

Buying balled plants

When purchasing balled-and-burlapped plants, make certain that the ball of earth is at least one-half as wide as the shrub's top spread. The ball should be firm, not rebuilt with added soil.

Rose planting

When planting rose bushes, it's important to take care so plants have a good chance of survival and flower production. The following are steps toward success:

1. Unpack and place where there's no exposure to drying sun and wind.
2. If stems are shriveled on arrival, soak entire plant in water for 24 hours.
3. Prune tops back to about 12 inches above crown of plant. Cut away any damaged stems or roots.
4. Place plants in water until you're ready to plant them.
5. Dig planting hole sufficiently large enough to accommodate roots without crowding or coiling roots. Make small cone of soil in center of hole. Fan out roots over cone, leaving no crowded or bent roots. Fill planting hole with soil. Leave graft or bud joint about 1/2-inch below soil line.
6. Add water to drive out air pockets. Mound soil around stems.
7. Remove soil mound in about two weeks, preferably on a cloudy day. Burlap, sphagnum moss or similar material may substitute soil mound. Fall-planted roses need soil mound removed.
8. Once spring growth begins, apply organic fertilizer sparingly. Chemical fertilizer should not be used the first year.
9. More blooms are produced in hot weather if roots are cooled by a mulch cover.

Locating shrubs

Strive not to use too many shrub varieties in the foundation planting. Smaller homes need no more than four to six different kinds. Too many shapes and forms of plant materials at the base of a building tend to give a cluttered appearance. Employ extra plants in a shrubbery border or a screen to hide unsightly views. Use low-growing or slow-growing plants beneath windows.

Starting a new lawn

No matter what type or variety grass chosen, success depends largely on soil preparation. Level and grade area to be planted. Fill low places and slope lawns away from house. Mix in soil conditioner of organic material such as old sawdust, sewage sludge, peanut hulls and cotton gin waste. Inorganic conditioners include colloidal phosphates, vermiculite and perlite. Fertilizer and iron should be added on the basis of a soil test. The variety and type of grass will decide the kind and amount of fertilizer to be used.

Ground covering plants

Most plants used for ground covers are not at their best in open sun. Among the most popular for use in shady spots are English ivy, the vincas, ajugas, liriope and Mondo grass. Low-growing junipers and santolina are adapted to full sun. Ground covers are useful in areas where grass gives a poor growth response, such as beneath shade trees. They serve a good purpose on steep banks. Such low-growing covers are popular as living mulches for foundation plantings around buildings and as a living cover for beds or shrubs.

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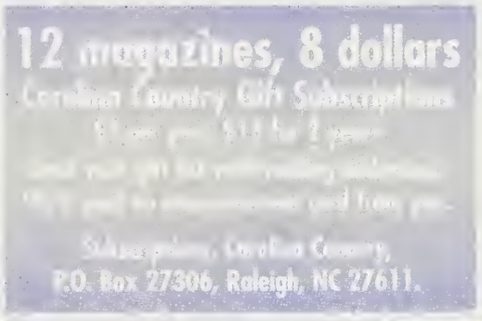

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Strawberry Heart Cake

1 package (18-1/4 ounces) white cake mix
1 package (3 ounces) strawberry gelatin
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/3 cup vegetable oil
4 eggs
1 package (10 ounces) frozen sweetened strawberries, thawed
1/2 cup cold water
1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
5 to 5-1/2 cups confectioner's sugar
Red-hot candies, optional

In a mixing bowl, combine cake mix, gelatin and flour. Beat in oil and eggs. Drain strawberries, reserving 1/2 cup syrup for frosting. Add berries and water to batter; mix well. Divide batter between two waxed paper-lined 8-inch baking pans, one square and one round. Bake at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes (square) and 35-40 minutes (round) or until cake tests done. Cool for 10 minutes; remove from pans to wire racks to cool completely. In a small mixing bowl, combine butter and reserved syrup. Gradually add sugar; beat until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Place square cake diagonally on a 20-inch-by-15-inch covered board. Cut round cake in half. Frost cut sides; place frosted sides against the top two sides of square cake, forming a heart. Frost sides and top of cake. Decorate with red-hots if desired. Yield: 12 to 16 servings.

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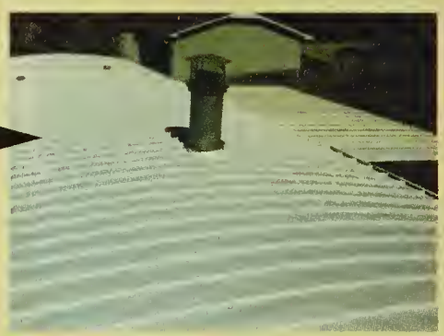

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